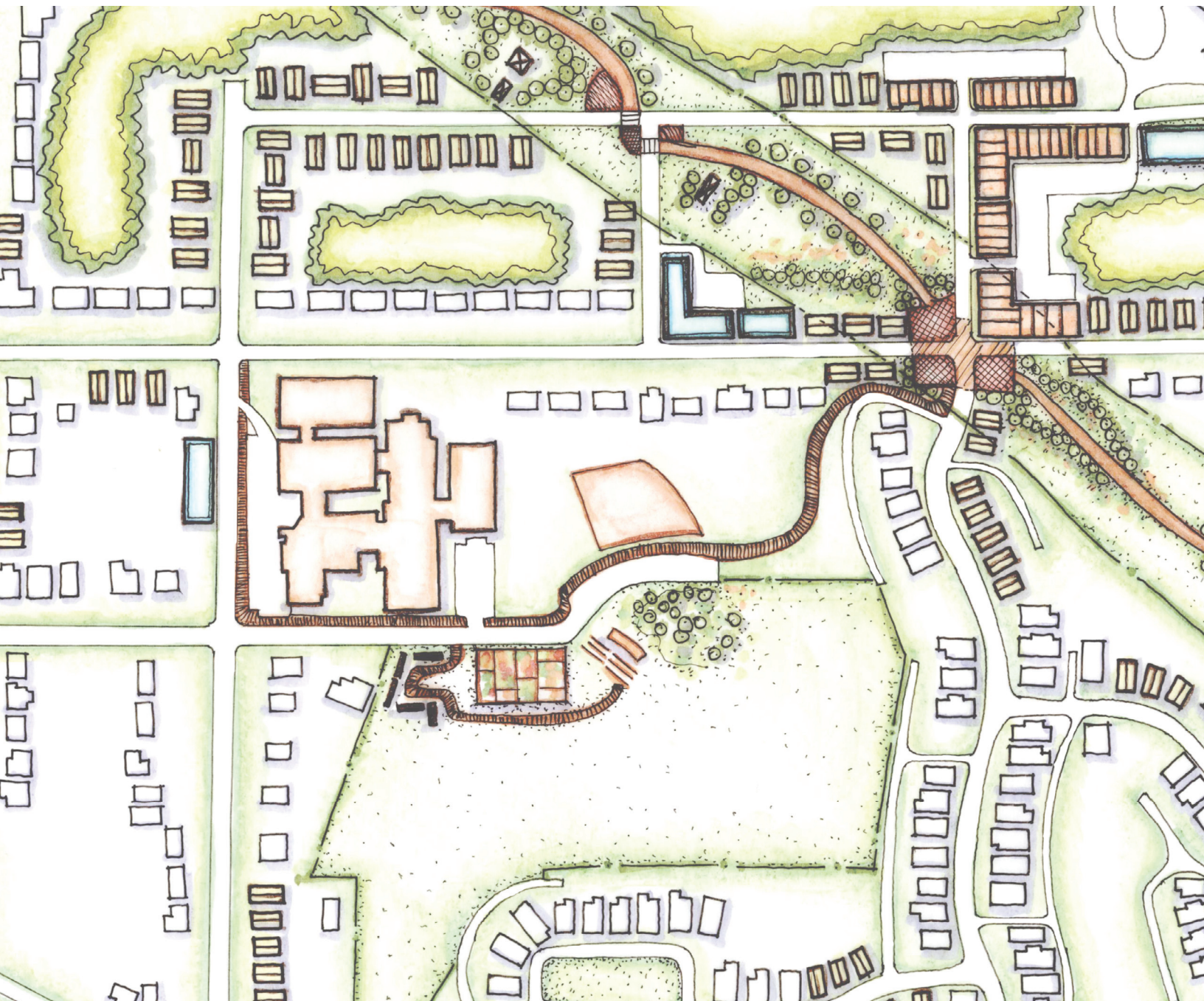


THE EFFECTS OF SPATIAL COMMUNITY DESIGN ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN URBAN SCHOOLS

Research and Application to Two Elementary Schools in Atlanta with Large Latino and Low-Income Student Populations

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April 2013

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks To:

Professor Michael Dobbins


Dr. Daniel Immergluck

Dr. Chin-Sook Pak - Ball State University

Carla Smith, Councilwoman for District 1, City of Atlanta

Clara Axam, Former Deputy Superintendent for Atlanta Public Schools

Atlanta Regional Commission



“Unless concerted action is taken to alleviate the hardships related to poverty and to spur development that can lead to economic and social stability for communities and families, little change in the character and quality of urban schools in the United States will occur”
(Pedro Noguera qtd. In McKoy, page 9, 2011).



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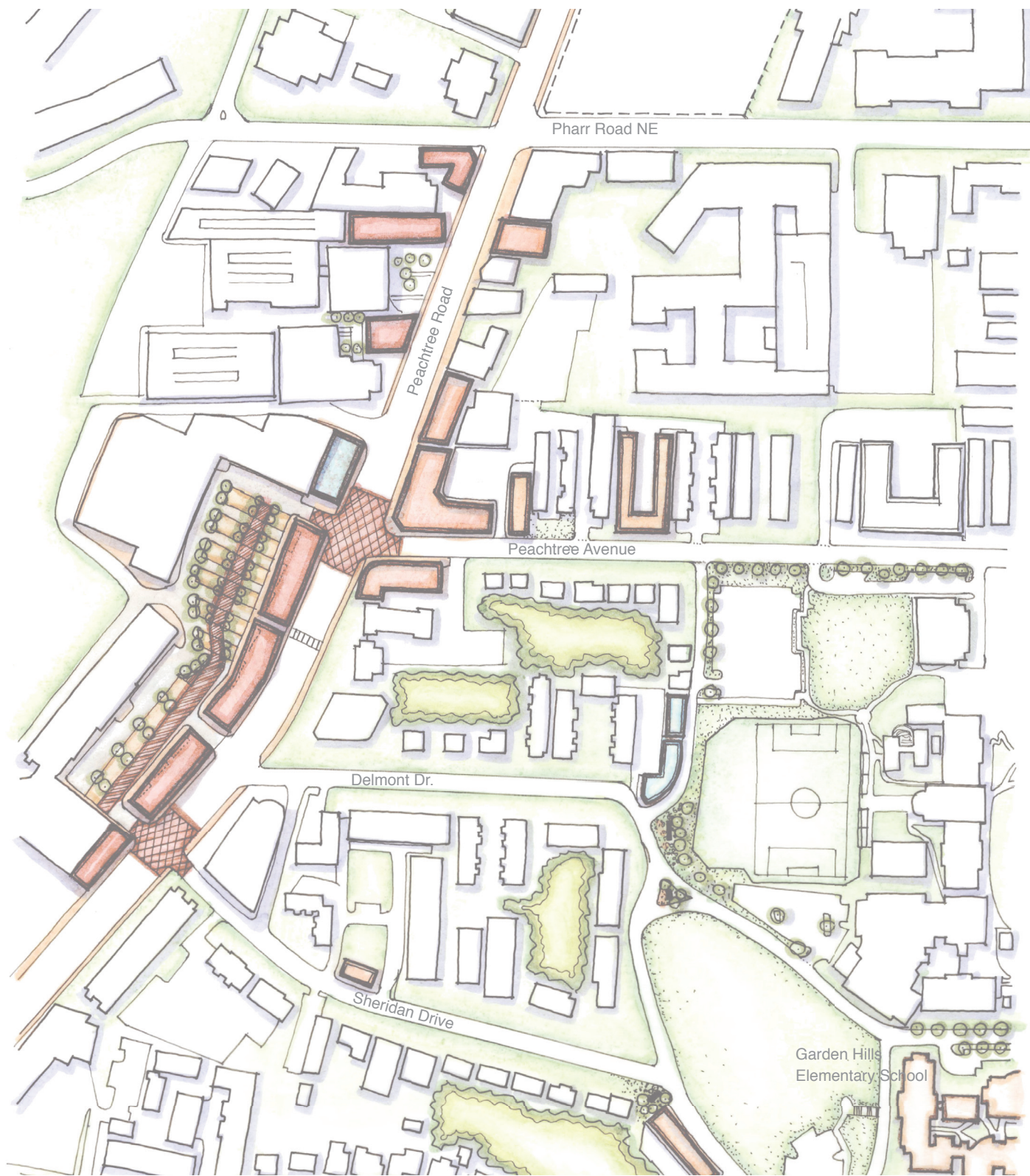
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Garden Hills Master Plan. See pages 100-101 for full plan and description.

This paper examines the link between spatial community design and the quality of neighborhood schools, with a particular focus on schools with high Latino student populations. Latinos are the fastest growing population, but Latino students have the lowest educational attainment levels. In Georgia, 44% of the Latino population did not complete high school in 2010, compared to 14% of the entire United States population. Latino students make up nearly the same share (23.4%) of the South's school enrollment as Black students (25.9%) (Siegel-Hawley + Frankenberg, 2012). Additionally, the State of Georgia has one of the fastest growing Latino populations in the country, with a growth rate of 18% between 2000 and 2010 (Andes, 2012).

This paper provides recommendations and plans for two schools, with considerations for the Latino student populations, in the Atlanta, Georgia, area - Benteen Elementary School on the southeast side and Garden Hills Elementary School on the northeast side of the city. Benteen Elementary has a 39% Latino student population, and 100% of the student population qualifies for free / reduced lunch; Garden Hills Elementary has a 70% Latino student population, and 81% qualify for free / reduced lunch (Georgia Department of Education [Georgia DOE], 2012b, 2012c). Background information is provided on the history of education in the South and Atlanta and current programs and organizations that accommodate the Latino population. Additionally, the following issues are addressed: barriers to education for Latino students, Latino cultural considerations, community revitalization techniques, school siting regulations and community design related to education, education policy methods, and how housing options affect the community and quality of education.

The policy and curriculum recommendations presented focus on integrating cultural activities into the curriculum, adding active learning to classroom lessons, providing early and sustained English as a Second Language education, enforcing disciplinary action, and encouraging community residents' and parents' accountability to the students and schools. The spatial design recommendations include: providing adequate affordable housing options for teachers, staff, and families; integrating employment, retail, green space, and entertainment options into the surrounding context; making walkable or transit-accessible options for students and staff to travel to school; and encouraging culture-specific organizations to locate near the schools to address the needs of existing residents. The framework-, master-, and site-scale plans for Garden Hills and Benteen school districts illustrate the above recommendations (pages 89 to 111). Finally, a preliminary timeline for immediate-, middle-, and long-term changes provides a base for the implementation strategy for the recommendations.

Problem Statement

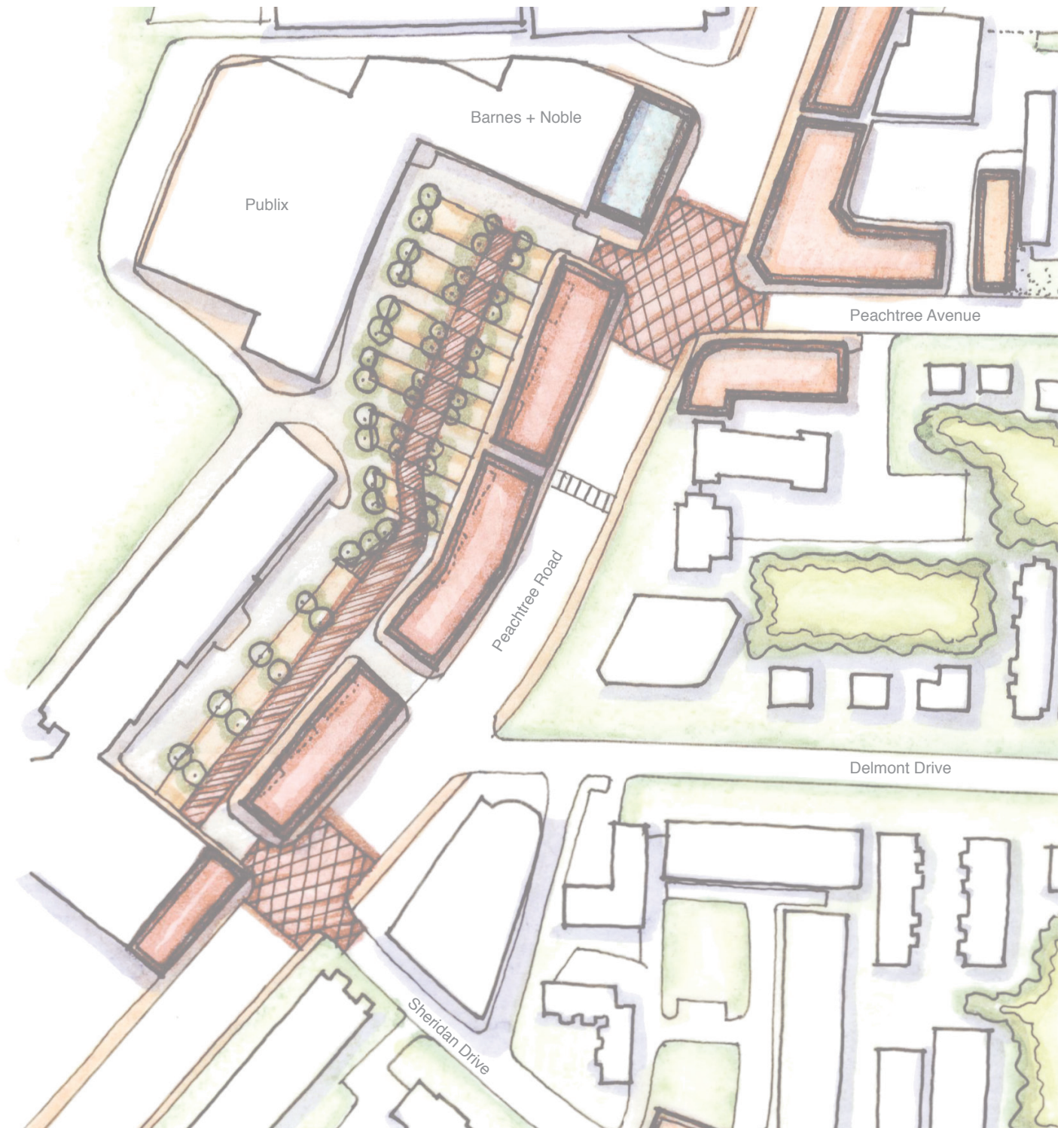
PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this project is to analyze the effects of school siting and spatial community design on the provision of quality education, with a particular focus on low-income and Latino students. This project will determine how to accommodate Latino culture and impacts into community design, define the issues and barriers to quality education, describe methods to change planning policy related to education, identify how spatial community design and school siting affect education, and determine how housing choice and policies affect education. An analysis of these issues will result in the development of community, framework-, master-, and site-scale plans and policy recommendations for Garden Hills and Benteen Elementary Schools in Atlanta, Georgia, to improve students' access to quality education.

SUB-PROBLEMS

- How are low-income and Latino neighborhoods defined, and what are the most important characteristics of Latino culture to accommodate?
- What are the current barriers for Latino and low-income students to quality education?
- How does planning policy currently address education?
- How do school siting and spatial community design affect the quality of education?
- How do housing policy and housing choice affect the access to quality education?

Design and cultural heritage can be integral elements to create a community plan that promotes higher quality education and community interaction. Successful community design related to the provision of quality education for low-income and Latino students requires consideration of the adversity that low-income and minority individuals experience, the rapid increase in the Latino population, Latino cultural characteristics, current access to education, and the necessity to provide services to foster upward mobility.



Garden Hills Master Plan (Festival Marketplace area). See pages 100-101 for full plan and description.

The Latino population in Atlanta and the United States continues to significantly increase. According to the 2010 Census, the Atlanta city Latino population was 5.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a), compared to the state of Georgia's population, which was 8.8% and the United States, which was 16.3%. In 2011, the estimated Georgia Hispanic population grew to 9.7% of the overall population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). The national growth rate for Latinos between 2000 and 2010 was 43%, compared to the overall growth rate of 9.7%. The State of Georgia has one of the fastest Latino population growth rates in the country, with a rate of 18% between 2000 and 2010 (Andes, 2012). The majority (63%) of Georgia's Latinos are of Mexican origin, but the remaining 37% of the Latino population originate from other Latin American countries. The native-born Latino population in Georgia has increased in the last decade, but particularly for the young age groups. For example, in 2010, 85% of Latino children under age 18 were born in the United States, and 87% were United States citizens. Naturalized citizens account for approximately 9% of the population for both the 2000 and 2010 Census years (Andes, 2012).

In the last decade, the Georgia Latino population has shifted from working adults to young families. For example, in 2010, one-third of all Latinos in Georgia were under the age of fifteen. One-quarter of working Latinos are employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance, and one-quarter of working Latinos are employed in the service industry. Usually, when Latinos immigrate to the United States, they live in low-income urban neighborhoods and experience adversity regarding the search for employment and obtaining educational opportunities (Haymes, 2000, 33). Because the population is quickly becoming the largest minority in America, it is necessary to integrate Latinos into society while maintaining their cultural heritage, and to provide educational services to assist with upward mobility (Andes, 2012).

Latino students make up nearly the same share (23.4%) of the South's school enrollment as Black students (25.9%). White students now account for 46.9% of students, a minority of students in the South. (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012). Many schools in the Atlanta metropolitan area have large Latino populations. In 2010-2011, Garden Hills Elementary School, with a total enrollment of 697, in northern Atlanta had a Hispanic population of 70%, Benteen Elementary, with a total enrollment of 231, in southeast Atlanta had a Hispanic population of 39% (Georgia DOE, 2012b, 2012c). The state Hispanic population for all schools is 12%, with a white student population of 44%, and a Black student population of 37% in the 2010-2011 academic year (Georgia DOE, 2012d). In addition to serving large Latino student populations, the Atlanta region schools discussed above have a large percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, as shown in the chart on page 14.

Students living in low-income neighborhoods usually have lower educational attainment. Because Latino immigrants often live in low-income neighborhoods, it is necessary to understand issues related to the access to education in order to address them effectively in a spatial community design that provides opportunities

Significance

Free / Reduced Lunch Percentages for Schools in Atlanta Region				
School Name	School System Name	School Percentage	State of Georgia Percentage	School System Percentage
Garden Hills Elementary	Atlanta Public Schools	81%	57%	76%
Benteen Elementary	Atlanta Public Schools	100%	57%	76%

Source: (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b, 2012c)

for better quality education. As indicated in the chart below, 44% of the Latino population in Georgia did not complete high school in 2010, compared to 14% of all of the United States population. The percentage is also much higher than the white and Black populations in Georgia (Andes, 2012). The additional charts on pages 15 and 16 show the test scores and limited English proficiency of students at Benteen and Garden Hills elementary schools. The charts demonstrate a need to accommodate the growing Latino student population and students from other immigrant groups, while also finding ways to increase the quality of education.

Economic and Education Status for Georgia Hispanic Population						
Criteria	Georgia Hispanic Population	US Total	US Hispanic Population	Georgia Total	Georgia Black Population	Georgia White Population
Economic Status-population below poverty line in 2010	28%	14%	29%	16%	24%	13%
Education - Did not Complete High school in 2010	44%	14%	38%	16%	18%	14%

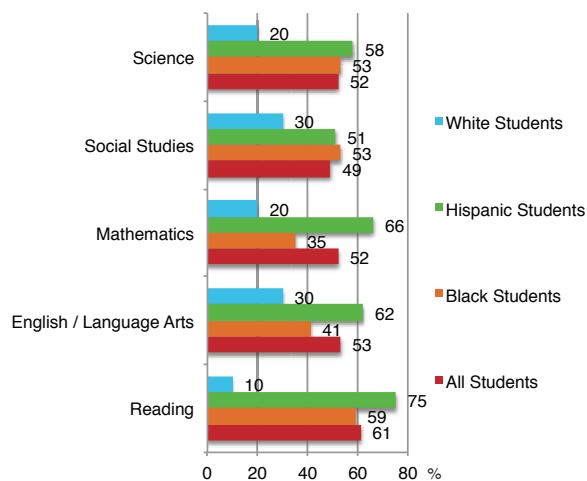
Source: (Andes, 2012)

Benteen Elementary met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria established by No Child Left Behind for the 2010-2011 school year, but Garden Hills Elementary school did not, based on the Academic Performance indicator. These standings are based off the following criteria: Test Participation; Second Indicator (another indicator used, such as attendance); and Academic Performance. Neither school is within the “Needs Improvement” Category (Georgia DOE, 2012b, 2012c). The charts illustrate the test scores and performance data for the schools only at the fifth grade level to show the ultimate progression and level of education attained throughout the time enrolled at the school. Throughout the Atlanta Public Schools system, 55% of the schools did not meet the AYP standards for 2010-2011 (Georgia DOE, 2012a). However, Benteen Elementary experienced great improvement in CRCT-5 test scores for the fifth grade from the 2008-2009 to 2010-2011 years. Large percentages of students in 2008-2009 did not meet expectations, and in 2010-2011, no students were below expectations, except for the Social Studies section (Georgia DOE, 2012b). In the 2010-2011 school year, the third grade attainment levels at Benteen Elementary were lower than the fifth grade levels, with larger percentages of students not meeting expectations on the tests. The same is true for Garden Hills Elementary for the third grade test scores in 2010 to 2011. Some numbers could be skewed or inaccurate for Benteen Elementary because, in 2009, the school was involved in the cheating scandal that was unearthed in 2011 (Turner, 2011; Wheatley, 2011).

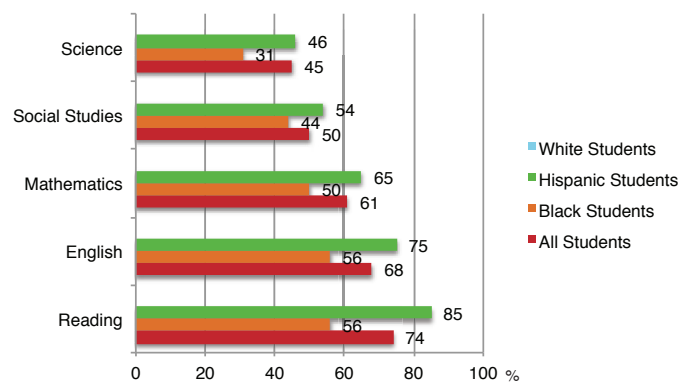
GARDEN HILLS PERFORMANCE CRCT-5 TEST SCORES

Meeting Expectations

Source: (Georgia DOE, 2012c)

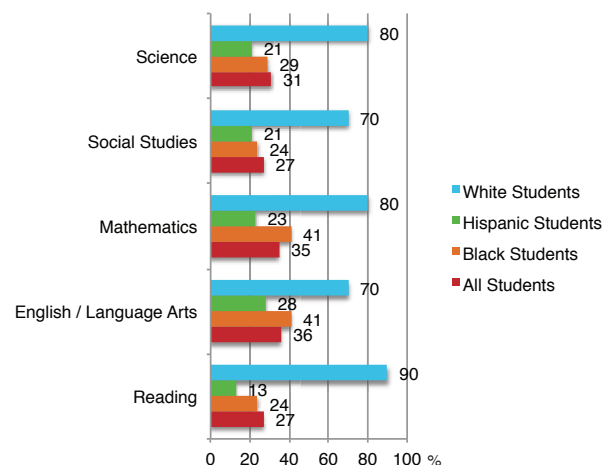


2010-2011 School Year

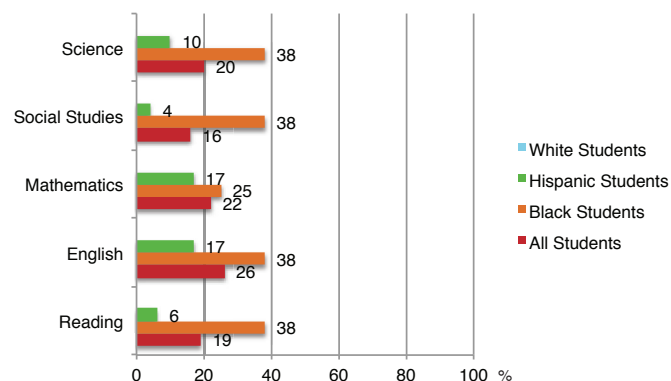


2008-2009 School Year

Exceeding Expectations

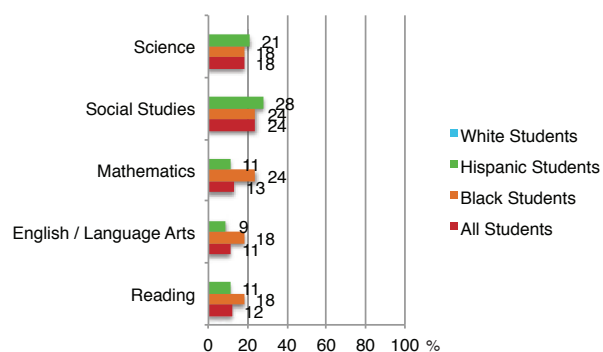


2010-2011 School Year

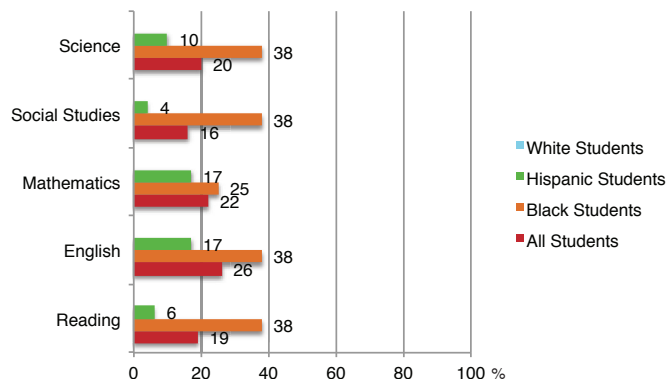


2008-2009 School Year

Not Meeting Expectations



2010-2011 School Year



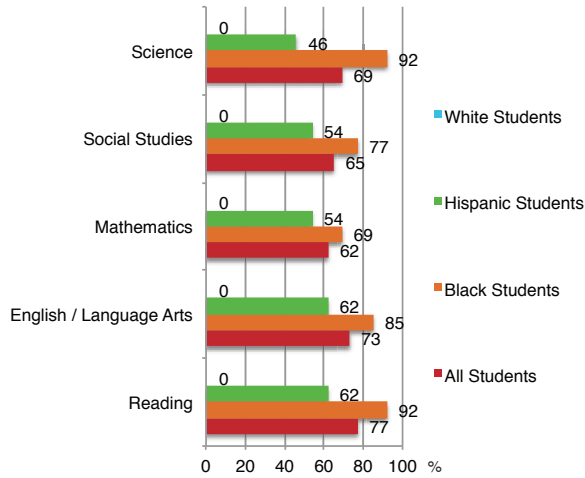
2008-2009 School Year

**Asian and white student populations are not shown on many charts because the student population was too small for those years.

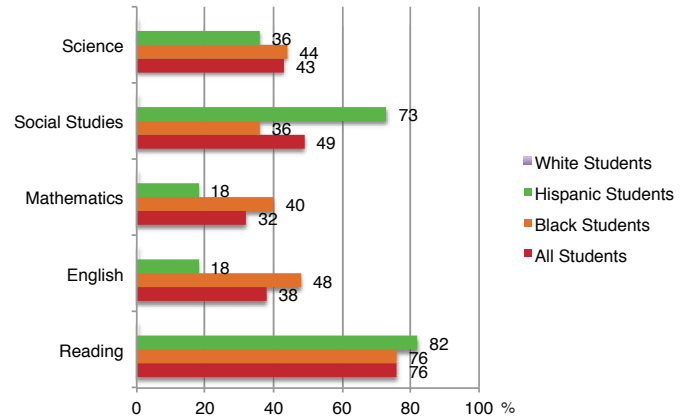
BENTEN PERFORMANCE CRCT-5 TEST SCORES

Source: (Georgia DOE, 2012b)

Meeting Expectations

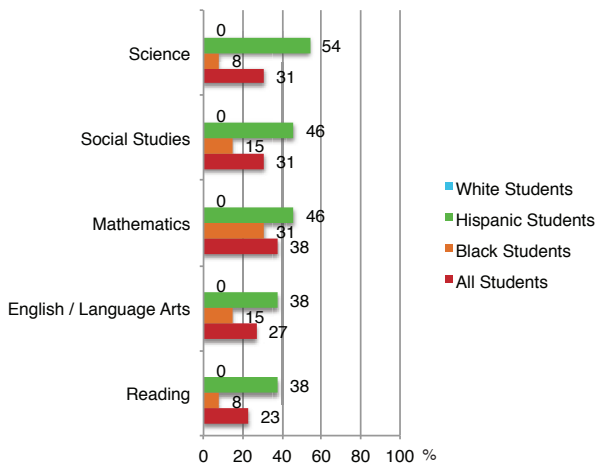


2010-2011 School Year

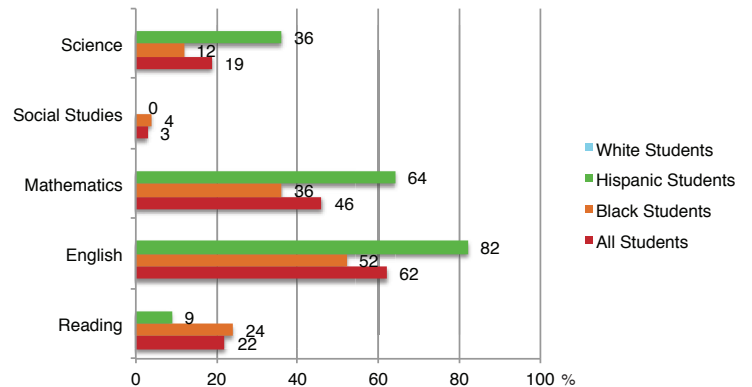


2008-2009 School Year

Exceeding Expectations

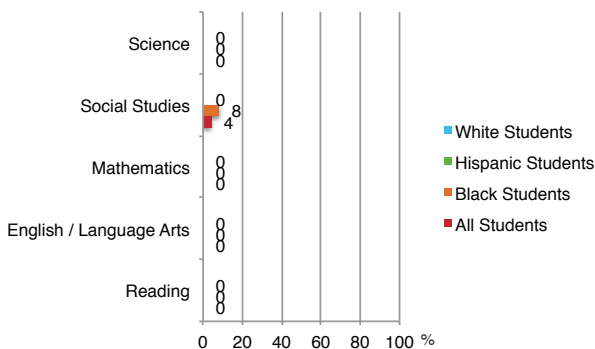


2010-2011 School Year

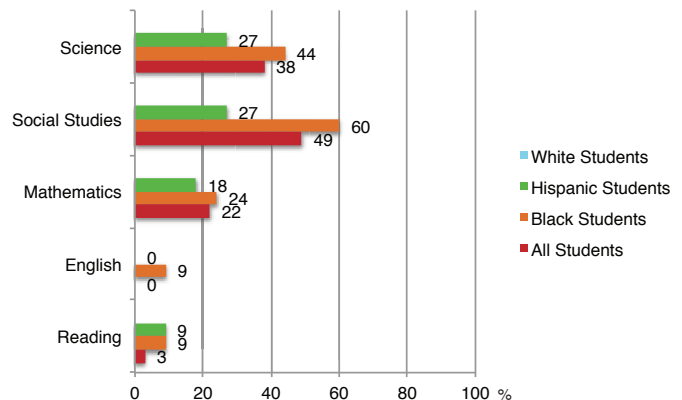


2008-2009 School Year

Not Meeting Expectations



2010-2011 School Year



2008-2009 School Year

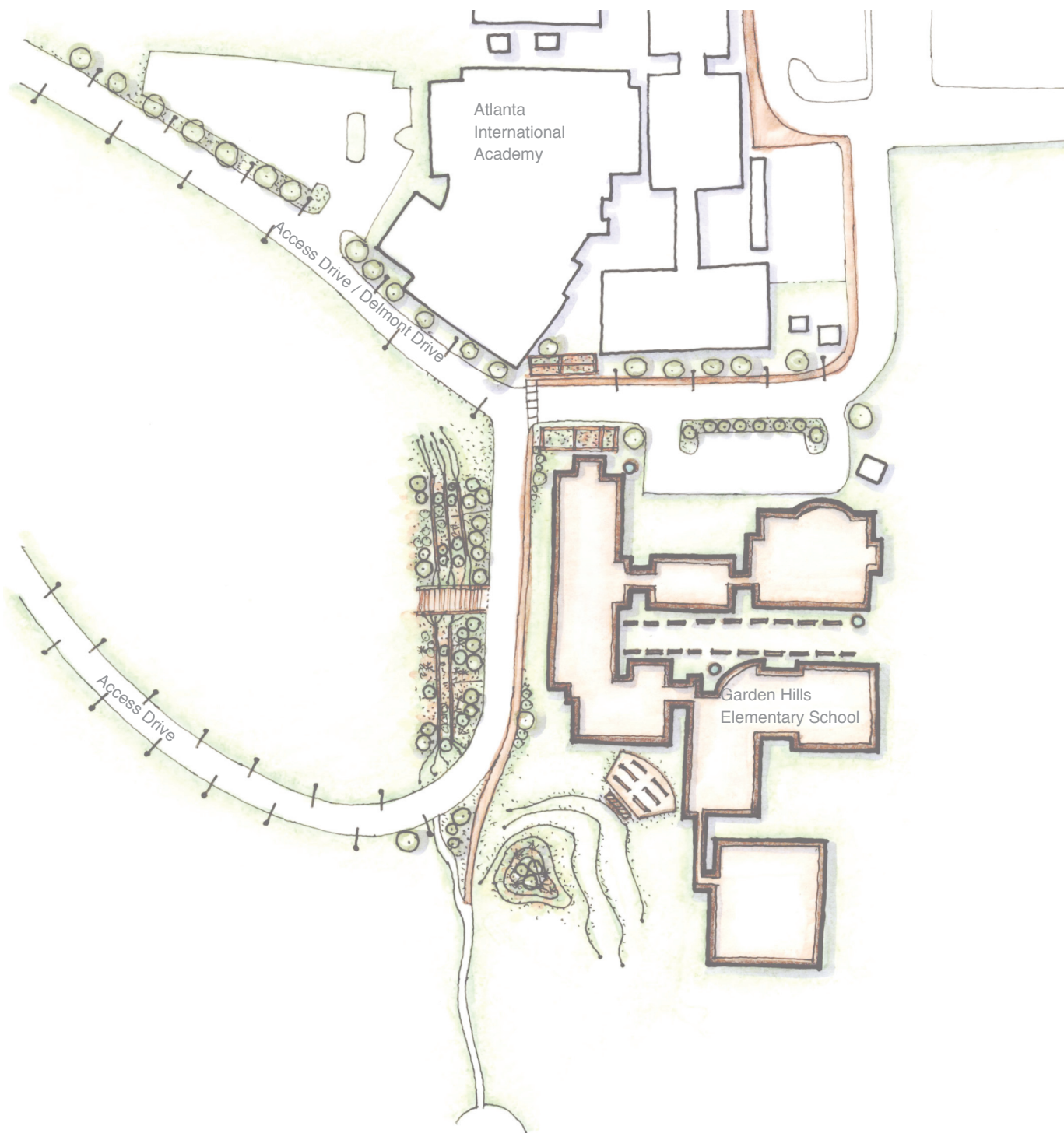
**Asian and white student populations are not shown on many charts because the student population was too small for those years.

The charts indicate that in many subjects for Garden Hills Elementary, the Hispanic and Black student populations do not reach the attainment levels of the white student population. Benteen Elementary School had no white student population for the 2010-2011 school year, but the charts indicate that for the fifth grade class, the Black and Hispanic student populations reached similar attainment levels. However, a larger percentage of the Latino student population exceeded expectations than the Black student population. At Garden Hills, the difference is clear between the white student population and the Black and Latino student populations, because 70%-90% of white students exceeded expectations, and only 13%-41% of Black and Latino students exceeded expectations (a smaller percentage of Latino students exceed expectations than Black students) for the CRCT-5 test (Georgia DOE, 2012b; 2012c).

Hispanic Economic Power

U.S. Hispanics had 1.2 trillion dollars in spending power in 2012, making up 10% of all spending power, and, in comparison, Georgia Hispanics had 16 billion in spending power. Hispanic spending power has increased since 2000, and it is projected that Hispanic spending power will grow faster than African-American buying power, but slower than Native American buying power. This increase is partly due to the dramatic increase in population. However, the Latino population is also young, as 34.9% are under 18, compared to 20.8% of non-Hispanics. The number of Hispanic business owners increased by 44% from 2002 to 2007, and the number of Hispanics who receive high school diplomas and bachelor degrees has also increased. Latino households spend 85% as much as the non-Hispanic household because of lower average income levels (Humphreys, 2012). Because of this, communities should consider methods to educate Latino immigrants and students more effectively and encourage the development of Latino entrepreneurship.

Both Garden Hills and Benteen elementary schools are located in the Atlanta Public School system, with different economic backgrounds. A comparison of these school communities in terms of spatial design, demographics, economic status, and housing will result in using strengths from each school and school district to determine an ideal community design and school siting concept. Incorporating Latino culture in a redevelopment and education plan provides a cultural asset for the community and assists with the assimilation into American culture.



Garden Hills Elementary Site Plan. See page 110 for full plan and description.

THE SOUTH + ATLANTA'S EDUCATION HISTORY

Basic History

The South was the center of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's through the 1980's; therefore, the region experienced racial transformation that increased school integration. However, for the last twenty years, the schools have become more segregated. At the peak of the Civil Rights movement, the southern states were less urban than they are currently and had more minorities in small towns and rural areas. Originally, the South resisted the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, but the 1964 Civil Rights Act cut federal funding to segregated school districts, which resulted in much faster de-segregation efforts. Recently, more than 200 schools in the south were released from court oversight for segregation issues, and in 2007, the Supreme Court made it more difficult for schools to pursue integration voluntarily (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012).

The South was primarily Black-white before and during the Civil Rights movement, making the goal of legislation to integrate those two racial groups. The Latino growth in the school populations has been ignored throughout the efforts to integrate schools. As the Latino population grew, the de-segregation plans were removed, and the population's rights were not explicitly acknowledged. As a result, from 1980 until the present, the likelihood for Latino students to be concentrated in "intensely segregated minority schools," defined as enrolling 90% to 100% minority students, has been stronger than for Black students (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012). School districts that have stopped enforcing desegregation have experienced an increase in segregation, particularly in elementary schools. This is an issue because many believe that re-segregation will hinder test scores, graduation rates, and college entry levels for Black and Hispanic students. The orders were removed because of many complaints of losing neighborhood schools, Black students spending more time commuting, and because more Black schools were closed and the teachers were fired (Garland, 2012).

Segregation

For many decades, Black students in the South were more integrated than Black students in other parts of the country, but between 1991-2010, the percentage of Black students in "intensely segregated minority schools" nearly reached the national percentage of 38.1%. By contrast, in 1980, only 23% of Southern Black students attended such schools. Throughout the southern region, white students make up 30% or less of the enrollment in the schools of typical Black students (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012).

For Latino students, in the last four decades, the percentage of Latino students attending "intensely segregated minority schools" has risen from 33.7% in 1968 to 43.1% in 2009. This number indicates that two out of five Latino students, the fastest-growing minority group, attend such schools in the South. However, at the metropolitan level in many southern cities, Latino students experience more exposure to white students than

Background

Black students experience. In Atlanta, the Latino student population has grown, making up 13% of all students, but the exposure to white students has decreased by ten percentage points to 29.8% since 2002. The typical Latino student in ten southern metro areas attends a school that has at least a 40% white student population, but 75% of Latino students overall have attended predominantly minority schools over the past 30 years (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012).

Issues in Education

The Southern region and the country as a whole have been designed by land use policy that builds inequality. Magnet schools aim to bring students from different areas to focus on a specific type of education, and charter schools are usually more segregated than traditional public schools because they lack the civil rights oversight required at traditional public schools. Additionally, a majority of the students in the South (52.7%) that qualify for free/reduced lunch, but in Georgia, the percentage is 56.1%. In Georgia, Latinos typically attend schools with 64% of the students qualifying for free/reduced lunch, and Black students typically attend schools with 68% of the students qualify. In contrast, white students in Georgia typically attend schools with 40% of the student population qualifying as low-income. The exposure to low-income students for the 2009-2010 year was 61.4% for Latinos, 65.5% for Blacks, 35.2% for whites, and 38.5% for Asians in Atlanta. Black students are exposed to more poverty in nearly every Southern state, which is different from the rest of the United States where Latino students are exposed to higher levels of poverty (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012).

Latino Growth

The South has the largest enrollment of students (15 million) of any region in the country, and one-quarter of the South's enrollment is Latino, accounting for nearly the same percentage as Black students overall in the South. In Georgia, approximately one of every ten students is Latino, with the public school enrollment distribution as follows: 11.3% Latino, 45% white, 37.4% black, 3.2% Asian. The Georgia first grade public school enrollment for Latino students (14.2%) is higher than the overall percentage, slightly lower than overall for the white population at 43.9%, and much lower than the overall population for Black students at 22.7% (Siegel-Hawley, et al., 2012).

Georgia Charter School Debate

The Georgia Charter School Amendment (Amendment One) was passed in November 2012 as part of the local, state, and national election process. This amendment allows the state to recreate the Georgia Charter School Commission and approve charter schools (Washington, 2012). The Commission was dissolved in 2011 because the Georgia Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to create a Charter School Commission separate from the State Board of Education (Bailey-Covin, 2012). This amendment raises issues about the availability of funding for schools in the traditional public system and increased segregation (Bailey-Covin, 2012). Those in favor of the amendment believe that charter schools provide an alternative for students attending struggling

public schools. Voters opposed to the amendment emphasized the local school boards' authority to approve charter schools, and if rejected, the Board of Education's ability to approve them. Opponents also state that the commission wastes tax money and eliminates the authority of local school boards. Others stated that more charter schools would mean less money for traditional public schools experiencing financial constraints (Washington, 2012).

Atlanta Public School Changes

In 2012, the Atlanta Public School Board approved the 18-month extension of Superintendent Erroll Davis' contract to begin in July 2013, but they added a provision that allows his termination within 90 days notice. Conflict surrounded the decision because he removed six administrators from North Atlanta High School and changed school districts, which resulted in closing schools in south Atlanta and approving \$100 million facility for North Atlanta High School. He also changed bus routes, angering parents whose children had to walk to school in unsafe neighborhoods. He started running the district after the widespread cheating scandal in 2011 (Scott, 2012).

Georgia state cuts in per pupil spending started in 2002, and spending has decreased another 17.6% since then. In fact, since 2009, six districts in the core of metropolitan Atlanta have cut the number of teachers and their salaries. Five of the districts have more students per teacher, and three teach fewer days a year. The Atlanta Public Schools system has decreased the number of teachers 15%, has more students per classroom, and has made pay cuts. The school system also receives 10% less from local revenues and 17% less from state revenues (Pendered, 2012).

ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THE LATINO COMMUNITY

Many programs and organizations exist at the national, state, and local level to assist Latinos with upward mobility and educational achievement. Communities need to provide better awareness about and access to these organizations. The Benteen and Garden Hills neighborhoods could benefit from outreach programs or a branch of the offices from the Atlanta organizations.

Latin American Association - Atlanta

The Latin American Association is located in both Atlanta and Norcross, Georgia. The Atlanta office is on Buford Highway, a good location for some, but it is still 2.6 miles from the Garden Hills neighborhood and 11.6 miles from the Benteen neighborhood. The organization offers community services, Spanish classes, employment services, youth programs, language and educational programs, immigration services, and translation services. The association also provides youth programs, language and educational programs, translation services, and immigration services (The Latin American Association, n.d.). The following describes many of the services provided by this organization.

• Community Services:

- o Parenting classes
- o Community health programs
- o Domestic violence assistance
- o Housing and utilities assistance
- o Food and clothing assistance
- o Translations
- o Information and references for legal, financial, medical, and shelter services

The parenting classes educate parents on parenting skills and their relationships with their children through parenting techniques, relationship conflict resolution, child development, and anger management. The Latin American Association partners with many organizations to provide the health services, which include: health tests, Medicaid and food stamps assistance, blood drives, pre-natal classes, and legal aid. The housing assistance provides financial management services for rent, mortgages, and utilities to prevent homelessness. The program has guidelines to determine the applicants' need, eligibility, and amount of assistance necessary. The translation services provide translations of official documents, such as, school transcripts, and diplomas (The Latin American Association, n.d.).

• Employment services

- o Job search courses
- o Career counseling
- o Resume writing
- o A "job bank"
- o Special events

The job search courses provide important information on the process, such as recognizing skills, accessing resources, preparing for interviews, and succeeding in the work force. People who wish to use the Latin American Association's employment services must go to employment orientation. Career counseling is one-on-one counseling to help participants identify their skills and interests and to match them with stable employment. Clients can also ask the organization to write a professional resume for a small fee. The job bank allows people to post their resumes online and apply for jobs in the online forum (The Latin American Association, n.d.).

Other Organizations + Places – Atlanta Region

The Unidos Dual Language Charter School is a charter school located in Forest Park, in metropolitan Atlanta in Clayton County. The curriculum includes reading, writing, and speaking Spanish and English with a goal to prepare students to live in a global society. Spanish is not taught as a separate class, but it is acquired through instruction in other areas, and at least half of all instruction is in Spanish (Unidos Dual Language Charter School, 2011). Big Brothers, Big Sisters provides a Hispanic Mentoring Initiative by recruiting Latino volunteers and children (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta, 2010). El Comité Hispano de Gainesville aims to bridge Hispanic and Non-Hispanic communities and to provide direction with political and social problems (Center for Latino Success and Achievement in Education [CLASE], 2012). The Atlanta Virtuosi Foundation offers scholarships, music programs, orchestras, summer programs, and the Festival Latino in Waleska (CLASE, 2012). Plaza Fiesta is a mall in Atlanta, which has become “the heart of the Latin American Community in Georgia.” The mall features nearly 300 retail and specialty stores, but is also a gathering place for the community with many entertainment events (Plaza Fiesta, 2008-2009).

Georgia Organizations

The Georgia PTA speaks for children before government agencies and encourages parent and public involvement in schools (CLASE, 2012). The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education has business, education, community, and government leaders that change policy and education in Georgia. Communities in Schools in Georgia started more than 30 years ago, and the national organization is the country's best drop-out prevention program (Communities in Schools Georgia, n.d.). The organization seeks to unify existing resources of communities around children, families, schools as a support system and ensure that students receive personal attention, mentoring, and tutoring. They also work with local business leaders and school superintendents to form public-private partnerships with people living and working in communities (CLASE, 2012).

National + Federal Organizations

The League of United Latin American Citizens is a national organization with many branches. The organization's goal is to advance the Latino population in the United States in “economic condition, educational

Background

attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights.” Programs offered include leadership initiatives, youth leadership programs, housing services, literacy programs, parent involvement initiatives, health programs, immigration and citizenship services, education campaigns, and many others. Atlanta is home to the 950 Council with officers and members (League of United Latin American Citizens, 2012).

A federal organization, the Piedmont Migrant Education Agency (PMEA) for Region 3, which includes the Atlanta metropolitan region, offers many services. The programs and services include educational support services to youth of migrant families employed in agriculture, academic support, summer instruction, parent and family training, home to school communication, drop-out prevention, GED programs, and social services (CLASE, 2012). The Georgia Department of Education and Cross-Functional Monitoring Teams monitor the compliance of the region’s organization (Georgia DOE, 2012e)

Higher Education Initiatives

Because Latino students will soon comprise a quarter of Georgia’s college-age residents, colleges and universities must reach out to the population for the colleges’ and state’s success. However, outreach is difficult because of language barriers, teenagers’ wishes to support their families, and a low level of knowledge about paths to pay for higher education. Undocumented students face more financial barriers because they must pay out-of-state tuition, and Latino families are hesitant to assume debt to pay for college. Because of the challenges, college recruiters should visit places that students and their relatives frequent, such as churches, festivals, sports, and community gatherings. For example, Georgia Perimeter College set up a booth at Fiesta Georgia. Part of the goal is to convince other family members that college is the best choice for the student. Colleges have also hired bilingual recruiters and have printed brochures in Spanish. Georgia State University and the University of Georgia host recruiting programs that specifically target Latino students and their families. The Georgia State Office of Latino Student Services and Outreach started a program that pairs college students with high school students to encourage them to attend college. The programs and recruiters aspire to convince and educate students and their family members about college and how to find funding (Diamond, 2009).

Georgia Tech’s STEM Program in Gwinnett County

The Georgia Institute of Technology has teamed with the Gwinnett County Schools with a GoSTEM Pathways to College program, whose goal is to enhance the Latino students’ educational experience and strengthen the students that choose to pursue post-secondary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education. A four-year grant funds college students to work with the high school students once a week to help with reading, writing, and STEM education topics. The program aims not only to increase the students’ abilities, but to garner interest in STEM careers and help the students pursue the tools necessary for those careers. The program includes after-school activities weekly or bi-weekly, and classes, like workshops, college tours, and

community service projects, to acquire additional skills. The high school students recognize the need for the basic language skills for college applications, and there is a waiting list of students to join the program (Reddy, 2012).

CLASSroom Project at University of Georgia

The CLASSroom project at the University of Georgia shows teachers, counselors, and administrators how to meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged students and families by making the curriculum and school policies class sensitive. Many students face systemic classism because of tracking and labeling, and the teachers' statements of encouragement about "upward mobility" usually do not provide more incentive to work hard. The program encourages teachers to know about their students' lives away from school. This project has made a difference because 97.6% of students served by these programs have stayed in school or graduated (Grillo, 2012).



Proposed Festival Marketplace on Peachtree Road. See page 103 for full image.

Mission Statement, Goals, + Objectives

The mission of this project is to analyze how planning policy and spatial community design can affect the provision of quality education for low-income and Latino students. As a result, the research will be used to create community designs and offer policy changes to improve the quality of education within two Atlanta communities (Benteen and Garden Hills) with large low-income and Latino populations. The plans will integrate Latino culture to create dynamic communities for all residents. Because of the importance of education and the Latino culture's preference for school-based communities, the plan focuses on community and educational networks, which will encourage upward mobility through the addition of educational, job, and health services. The following goals and objectives describe the policy and planning recommendations:

- **Build upon cultural characteristics**

- o Connect to current retail, housing, open space, educational, job locations to complete the community network
- o Provide entertainment options that address cultural and social needs
- o Strengthen family and social networks by encouraging business networks through commercial, housing, and mixed-use development

- **Provide (and build upon) educational, health, and career services to encourage upward mobility**

- o Use schools and other facilities in the neighborhood as community gathering spaces
- o Connect to current programs and organizations in the Atlanta region
- o Design infill in nodal locations near the neighborhood schools

- **Offer spatial community planning policy + design guidelines that address access to education**

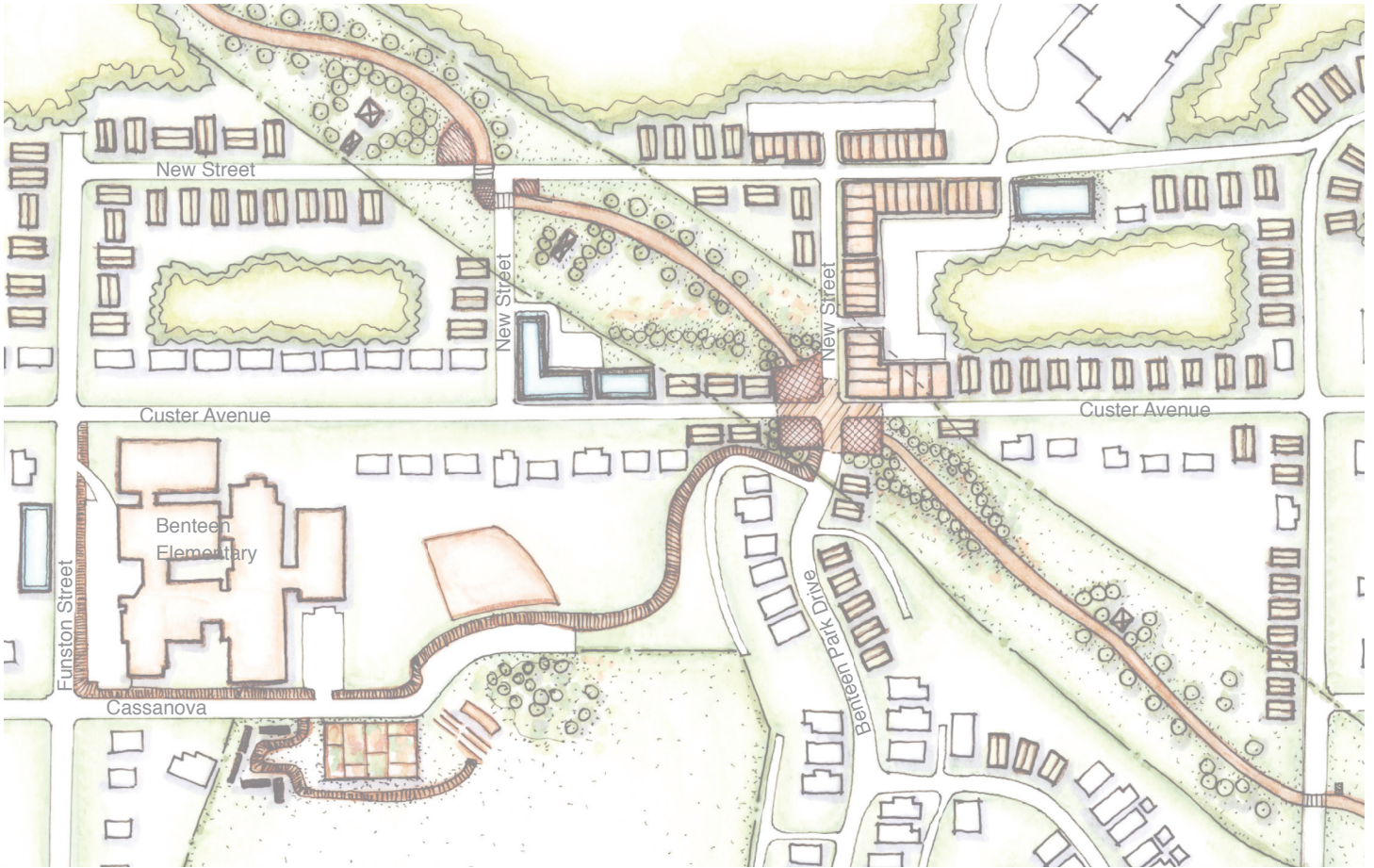
- o Improve school site design and access within the communities
- o Provide insight on forming community and school partnerships
- o Offer a variety of uses and amenities within the community to attract diverse residents
- o Encourage the provision of community services and programs adjacent to and at the schools
- o Improve the ability to walk and bike to school
- o Use the school sites as learning and community development tools

- **Identify key issues and barriers that prevent access to quality education and ways to address them**

- o Encourage the continued use of English as a Second Language classes
- o Provide information to give teachers positive perceptions of students' abilities to prevent misconceptions leading to discrimination
- o Offer community and educational services to parents and their children
- o Discover methods to make the best use of limited school resources to activate the curriculum

- **Provide additional and varied housing options**

- o Identify existing low-income or subsidized housing in order to add complementary uses
- o Offer affordable housing options for educators and the general population
- o Ensure that housing additions provide options for a mix of incomes



Benteen Master Plan 1. See pages 104-105 for full plan and description.

SYNTHESIS: Research + Design

The Garden Hills and Benteen neighborhoods of Atlanta present many opportunities for development focused around the schools and improving the access to education [see Diagrams, pages 70 to 87]. The following criteria make these areas ideal locations for implementing an education design and policy plan that integrates and accommodates the growing Latino population without excluding current or future residents:

- High Latino Populations
- Presence of a variety of housing types (diagrams, pages 75 and 85)
- Proximity to commercial land (diagrams, pages 72 and 81)
- Proximity to parks, community services, churches, and schools (diagrams, pages 73, 74, 76, 82, 83, 84)
- High percentages of low-income students

New development can connect to these uses to create a stronger social network, which is an important element of Latino culture. The mix of uses and presence of community open space present opportunities for development of new commercial and residential areas and an open space and trail network connecting with the existing park system. Many of the streets could be improved or connected to enhance pedestrian circulation and to slow traffic. The Garden Hills Elementary School is located in the Garden Hills Historic District, so special consideration was needed for changes made in that area. The Benteen Elementary School created a Safe Routes to School plan, so elements of this were included in the design recommendations. Vacant land and under-utilized spaces exist throughout both site areas and present opportunities for the first phase of development and improvements.

RESEARCH

The background information about Atlanta's educational history and the social programs in Atlanta currently serving the Latino population came from secondary sources, including organization websites, journal articles, and newspaper articles. Primary and secondary resources were used to define low-income and Latino neighborhoods and important characteristics of Latino culture. The primary resources included quantitative data from the Census, and demographic information from the Georgia Department of Education for Benteen Elementary and Garden Hills Elementary specifically. The Neighborhood Nexus tool, WEAVE, was used to obtain data from the Census tracts in which the schools are located. The secondary resources included a report from the Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia and Healthcare Georgia Foundation, books, and journal articles. The report by the Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia provided information on the education and economic levels of Latinos in Georgia and Atlanta, and the state of Hispanic health in Georgia. Books about Latino culture, family values, and social networks are available in Bracken Library at Ball State University. One book, entitled, *Latino Poverty in the New Century: Inequalities, Challenges, and Barriers* by Maria Vidal Haymes, Keith M. Kilty, and Elizabeth A. Segal, provides more insight about the sources of Latino poverty. Two books entitled *Casa y Comunidad*, by Henry Cisneros, which I own, and *Understanding Latino*

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Families: Scholarship, Policy, and Practice, written by Ruth E. Zambrana, also available in Bracken Library, provided detailed descriptions of Latino family values and social networks. Entertainment characteristics are described in *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places* by David Arreola, found in Bracken Library, and in, “Embracing Difference: Salsa Fever in New Jersey,” written by Katherine Borland for the *Journal of American Folklore*. The understanding of important facets of Latino culture and what defines low-income and Latino neighborhoods helped determine important pieces to include in the community and education plans and how to retain and use the existing Latino culture in the designs.

Primary and secondary resources were used to determine how the Latino population has changed the urban fabric throughout the country and in Atlanta. Examples of the transformations throughout the country are identified in *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places*, by David Arreola, and *Magical Urbanism*, by Mike Davis. The books described how different ethnic groups have shaped the urban environment that immigrants have inherited, such as building transformations, the use of plazas and open space, businesses, street use, and festivals. In addition, direct observation of the Benteen and Garden Hills locations provided insight on how the growing Latino population has affected the area. Many qualitative site visits with careful documentation of businesses, interactions, and street walkability were informative and integral parts of the research. Community design methods that allow Latinos to share their culture were also important, and were found in *Casa y Comunidad*. The information collected from this research provided a greater understanding of how the Latinos use inherited spaces to demonstrate their culture, and how to retain this in the revitalization plans.

Secondary sources were used to identify key barriers to education, including The National Research Council’s report, *Hispanics and the Future of America*, and the “Educational Barriers for New Latinos Georgia” article in the *Journal of Latinos and Education* by Stephanie Bohon, Jorge Atilas, and Heather MacPherson. These sources described common barriers for Latino and low-income students in American schools. This information was used to identify methods, policies, and design guidelines to overcome the barriers and provide higher quality and active education. Secondary sources were also used to devise policy recommendations to increase the access to high quality education. “Fast Tracking the Under-served”, from the American School Superintendents Association by Ana Diaz-Booz identified curricular and disciplinary mechanisms to increase accountability between teachers and students, and the community and the school. However, additional information came from the National Research Council report and interviews with Clara Axaam, former Deputy Superintendent with the Atlanta Public Schools, and Carla Smith, Councilwoman for District 1 in Atlanta, where Benteen Elementary School is located.

Collecting qualitative information about spatial design solutions regarding the inclusion of education and school planning/siting came from many secondary sources. Information about New Urbanist practices was useful for sustainable design that considers Latinos, and was found in *Casa y Comunidad*. The Georgia Conservancy

in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency created new guidelines for school siting, which were reviewed in the research process. Additionally, articles by Deborah McKoy et al. and Stephen Macedo “Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities” and “Property-Owning Plutocracy” from *Justice and the American Metropolis*, respectively, provided more insight in the ways to bridge education planning and traditional city planning, particularly in order to provide more access to lower-income students. Quantitative information gathered through GIS analysis about the two Atlanta neighborhoods was also important. This information includes topography, land use, zoning, community services, housing, and parks, available from Fulton the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Regional Commission. Site observations helped determine the best locations for the new design components.

Affordable housing is an important factor for equitable and Latino neighborhood design, and methods to make the communities more affordable were found in *Casa y Comunidad*. Housing can greatly affect the location of schools and the quality of schools, as mentioned in the *Geography of Opportunity* by Xavier de Souza Briggs, which I own. The Department of Housing and Urban Development website provides a database of all of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit housing in the area, which were mapped with Section 8 units using ArcGIS software to find the proximity to the schools. Internet searches were conducted to find Section 8 housing near the schools, but this information is potentially skewed because the searches only provided available units whose property managers accept the vouchers. I also searched for apartment complexes in the area to determine if complexes offered Section 8 housing. In addition, the HOPE VI (Olympic Legacy Program in Atlanta) was analyzed for the Centennial Place Elementary School and Drew Charter Elementary School that were added as part of mixed-income housing developments. This information came from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a report completed by Harvey Newman and Research Atlanta in conjunction with Georgia State University, and other journal articles.

School administrators and teachers were contacted in order to discuss the changing demographics and specifics about the schools. However, no responses were received. Carla Smith and the school’s website provided insight about Neighborhood Charter School, near Benteen Elementary. This school serves as a case study for community involvement an accountability to the school. The school in “Fast-Tracking the Under-served” serve as a case study for curricular and disciplinary actions.

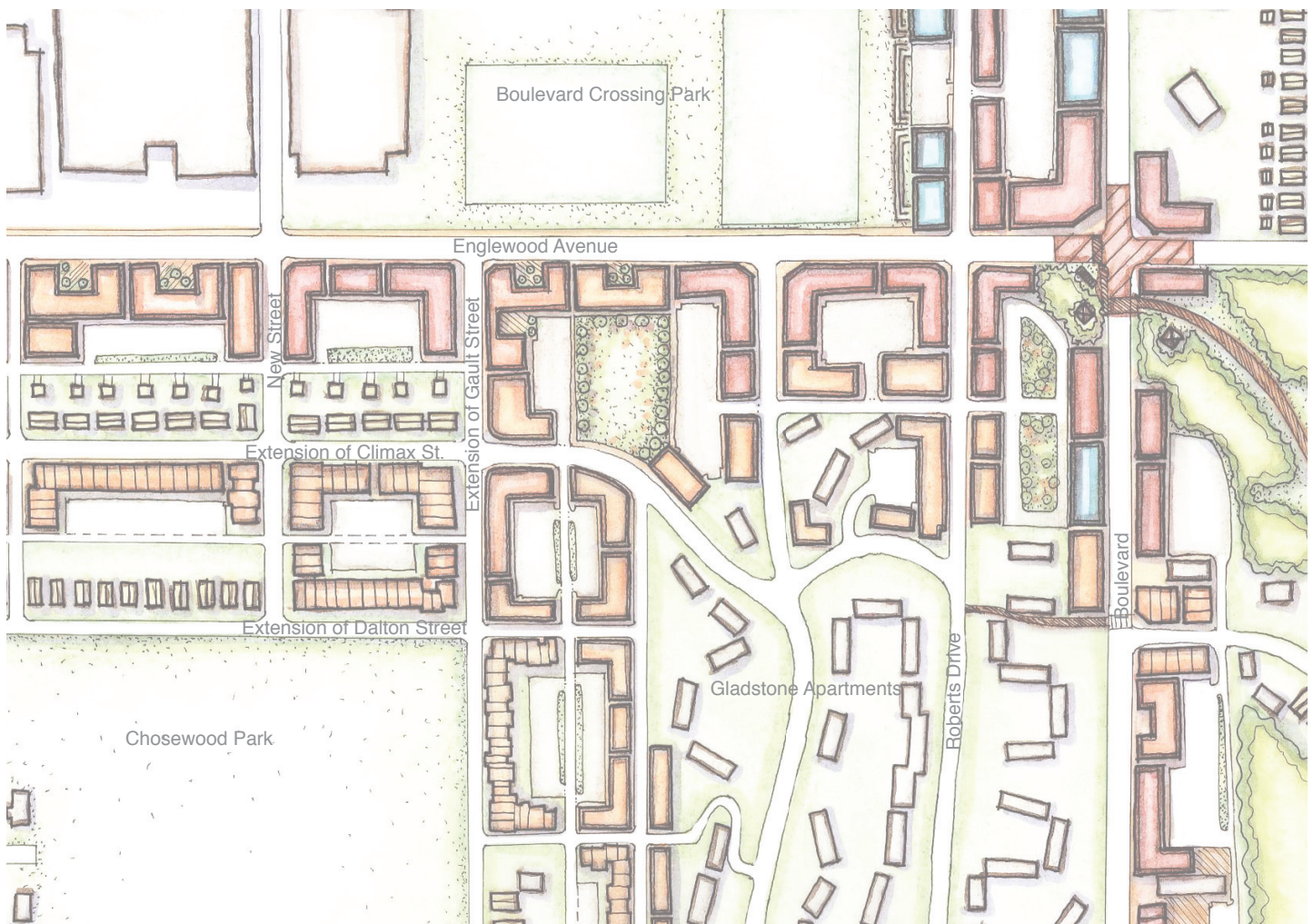
DESIGN + POLICY

As a result of the research, I devised spatial community concept plans derived from the Latino culture and addressing the educational needs. I also visited the locations multiple times to perform the site inventory and analysis of current conditions. Some elements that were analyzed include opportunities for integration of the schools into the communities, walkability of the communities, safety, sidewalk conditions, traffic patterns, opportunities, and land use. Framework plans were created to address overall design and policy needs for the

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school districts. Master plans were chosen and designed at key nodes that currently serve the community and are within walking distance of the schools. Site plans were designed to include elements to build the curriculum and increase community involvement and accountability to the schools. Additionally, interaction between the study schools and surrounding schools is encouraged. The Framework plans are on pages 94 and 96, the Master plans are on pages 100-101, 104-105, and 106-107, and the Site plans are on pages 110 to 111.

The neighborhood plans and educational policy recommendations accommodate the growing Latino population of the area without excluding other users, residents, and visitors, and allow for greater integration of educational planning into traditional city planning. Many of the Latino cultural characteristics present ideas considered beneficial to community development, such as frequent use of plazas and park space, strong family and social networks, compact development, walkable communities, mixed-use development, shared open space, and locally-owned businesses.



Benteen Master Plan 2. See pages 106-107 for full plan and description.

This review of literature analyzes the issues related to the provision of quality education, particularly for low-income Latino students, how to connect communities and students to existing educational programs, how to accommodate Latino culture into community design, methods to change planning policy related to education, and how housing options affect the access to education. The Garden Hills and Benteen neighborhoods in Atlanta, Georgia, are ideal locations for comparison and improved development because of the high Latino populations, differences in community design, school placement within the communities, and differences in access to work, social services, and retail locations.

Definition of Latino Neighborhoods + Characteristics of Latino Culture

Percentage of Latinos + Characteristics of the Population

The Latino population is the largest and fastest growing minority in the United States (Davis, 2000, 2). Latinos comprise over half of all of the immigration to the United States (National Research Council [NRC], 2006, 4). Between 1990 and 2000, the Georgia Hispanic Population quadrupled (NRC, 2006, 5), and this was partially encouraged by the 1996 Olympics, where the construction market, traditionally employing white residents, started hiring more Latinos (NRC, 2006, 91). The changes in the labor demand have historically been the major force attracting Latinos to new places in the country (NRC, 2006, 4-6), but some population growth is due to the fertility rate, accounting for half of all of the growth, and immigration, which was originally initiated by labor recruitment, economic factors, and Latino social networks (NRC, 2006, 67-68). Laws also affect the rate of immigration because limits on immigration from Latin America started in 1978 (NRC, 2006, 76), but two-thirds of the foreign-born Hispanics have arrived since 1980 (NRC, 2006, 2). According to the 2010 Census, the Atlanta city Latino population was 5.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a), compared to the state of Georgia's population, which was 8.8%, and the United States, which was 16.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b).

In 2010, 50.5 million people (16%) were of Hispanic or Latino origin in the United States. According to the U.S. Census, over half of the country's total population growth between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Latino population (Ennis, Vargas, + Albert, 2011). The foreign-born population in 2003 was 45%, and the second-generation population was 31% of the total (NRC, 2006, 18). The chart below summarizes the changes in the Hispanic population and the most represented ethnic groups within the population from 2000 to 2010.

Latino Population Changes 2000-2010

	2000 Population (millions)	2000 Percentage	2010 Population (millions)	2010 Percentage	2050 Prediction (millions)	2050 Percentage Prediction
Overall US Latino Population	35.30	13.00%	50.50	16.00%	100+	25.00%
Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban Population	27.22	77.1% (of Hispanics)	38.20	75.6% (of Hispanics)		
Mexican Population	20.60	58.36%	31.80	62.97%		
Puerto Rican Population	3.40	12.49%	4.60	12.04%		
Cuban Population	1.20	5.83%	1.80	5.66%		

Source: (Ennis, et al., 2011; National Research Council, 2006)

Review of Literature

Some major characteristics of the Latino population, unique from other ethnicities, include the youthfulness of the population, the low educational attainment levels, the percentage of people with low-wage jobs, a common language, a small-percentage of foreign-born immigrants, and the fact that millions are undocumented (NRC, 2006, 2). The Spanish language is the “single most distinctive difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in the United States,” which raises questions about acculturation and socioeconomic status (NRC, 2006, 46). Fluency in English increases with time spent in the United States and educational attainment (NRC, 2006, 51). Younger immigrants are more likely to be fluent in English, especially those with a high school education. Among foreign-born adults, non-Hispanics are 400% more likely to have college degrees, Hispanics are 300% more likely not to graduate high school, and the Mexican population is the least educated of all Latino groups. However, these numbers and percentages are reduced when considering the Latino population born in the United States. In 2003, the Hispanic population was approximately 40 million, and only Mexico had more “Hispanics” in the world with approximately 100 million people (NRC, 2006,16). In 2010, 41% of all Latinos lived in the West and 36% lived in the South” (Ennis, et al., 2011). Because of the nation’s large increase in the Latino population, changes should be made to integrate the population into society and create better neighborhoods with greater opportunity for education, entrepreneurship, and maintaining family values.

Causes of Latino Poverty

Throughout the United States, poverty is the most prevailing and critical social problem for Latinos (Haymes, 2000, 27). The culture, ties to family members in their home countries, or personal character do not create poverty conditions; the poverty results from lack of access to economic and educational opportunities (Haymes 33). Latinos face high unemployment rates, low high school and college graduation rates, low-income levels, and low employment rates in professional careers. In general, Latinos are motivated and willing to work, but some barriers for upward mobility remain, including the youthfulness of the population, illegal immigration status, low education levels before immigrating to the United States, lack of English skills, and discrimination (Haymes, 2000, 33). Education forms a large barrier for advancement and mobility in the United States for Latinos. Usually, Latino children attend inner city schools, which often do not have the funding or facilities available to teach English, so many students drop out of high school (Davis, 2000, 117).

The majority of sources reviewed agreed that education levels, discrimination, job placement, and lack of English skills were the main causes for Latino poverty and barriers for upward mobility. This information illustrates that communities with large Latino populations should provide more services to accommodate the population. Designing and planning for the availability of educational and social services, such as English as a Second Language classes, employment services and classes, and tutoring are necessary elements to connect the residents to each other and to the surrounding population.

Regarding educational attainment, in 2000, over half (52%) of the Georgia Latino population did not have a

high school diploma, compared to 21% of the overall Georgia population. However, in 2010, the percentage of adults without a high school degree decreased throughout the state of Georgia, to 44% for Hispanics and 16% for the total population. Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Latinos with only a high school diploma increased, from 19% to 27%, almost approaching the percentage for the overall state population at 29%. However, only 30% of Georgia's Latino population had attended higher education institutions in 2010, a change from 29% in 2000, and compared to the growth to 55% in 2010 from 50% in 2000 for the total population. A smaller proportion of Latino children between the ages of three and five are enrolled in school than their white and Black student peers. Children, largely U.S.-born, are the fastest growing portion of Georgia's Latino population (Andes, 2012). The chart below summarizes the information about high school completion and educational attainment in Georgia.

Latino High School Completion Changes

	2000 - Percentage with HS Diploma	2010- Percentage with HS Diploma	2000 - With HS Diploma Only	2010 - With HS Diploma Only	2000 - Attended Higher Education	2010 - Attended Higher Education
Georgia Latino Population	52%	44%	19%	27%	29%	30%
Georgia Total Population	21%	16%	29%	29%	50%	55%

Source: (Andes, 2012)

Family Organization

Latinos are highly family-oriented, making the family one of the most important aspects in their lives and culture. When considering all forms of households, the American Community Survey estimated that 91% of Georgia Hispanics lived in family households in 2010, and 60% lived within married couple family households (Andes, 2012). The usual household depiction includes traditional family values, behaviors, and large extended family structures. Latinos maintain a strong commitment to their families, provide support, and want to be geographically close to family members. The men are the heads of the household and make most of the decisions (Zambrana 1995, 43-45); however, due to immigration status and job availability, the family roles and structure must be flexible (Zambrana, 1995, 3-5). Men work away from home much of the time, so women take on more family roles when necessary, but raising children is a joint responsibility (Zambrana, 1995, 9). Usually the family structure is two parents and children, but, recently, single females head more families than in the past (Zambrana, 1995, 16-17). Latinos form large family networks with frequent relative visitation, different from non-Hispanic white families, who maintain long distance relationships with technology (Zambrana, 1995, 7). Latinos love to host large family events with extended relatives in attendance, and fiestas can be spontaneous for an event as simple as a soccer game (Cisneros, 2006, 21-22). Because of this, housing must be designed to accommodate large numbers of people, which can include access to public transit, flexible floor layout, and parking accommodations (Cisneros, 2006, 23-24).

Some concerns are that assimilation into the United States culture may reduce the sense of family and

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encourage more individualism, and intermarriage with other races could blur racial and ethnic lines (NRC, 2006, 139). Latinos have slightly larger households and closer relationships with extended families in comparison to non-Hispanic whites (NRC, 2006, 153). The biggest change in family behavior due to assimilation is the retreat from marriage and an increase in cohabitation, but another change to note is that the birth rates for unmarried women and divorce rates have increased (NRC, 2006, 140-141). The rate for childbearing when unmarried is usually much higher for the Latino population than for the white population (NRC, 2006, 143). The adversities that Latino immigrants face also affect the rates of non-marital childbearing, female head of household families, and higher ages for marriage (NRC, 2006, 146). In contrast, some aspects of Latino family life have been unaffected by assimilation into American culture, including a sense of ethnic identity, family importance, and the Spanish language. Throughout generations, individuals retain a strong sense of national origin, and people have a sense of community and loyalty to Latino issues. Children frequently become bilingual and they generally preserve the Spanish language as an important aspect of the culture (Zambrana, 1995, 49-57). The family-focused culture could hinder economic and social advancement, but that characteristic could also reduce the adverse consequences of immigration and poverty (NRC, 2006, 148).

Entertainment

Although many forms of entertainment are prominent in Latino culture, soccer and dance represent popular social forms of entertainment. Usually, when Latinos move to the United States, they search for jobs, homes, churches, and soccer teams, and generally use the city parks as playing fields. In Washington, D.C., Latinos use the soccer leagues for entertainment, social networking, and as a way to create the status-validation some Latinos may seek because their status in the United States is often lower than in their countries of origin. Soccer leagues provide a safe and family-oriented atmosphere that keeps people healthy and in touch with each other, and some leagues raise money to send to family in their home countries (Arreola, 2004, 171-182). Because Hispanic culture includes many different countries and ethnicities, many forms of dance exist. Salsa is described as a means of expression for Latinos who had been uprooted in many facets of their lives, such as location and language, and the music itself integrates multiple musical styles from the Americas (Borland, 2010, 467). Some Latinos view dance as a rebellion against the difficulties faced during immigration (Borland, 2010, 468). Many Salsa dancers, or salseros, oppose complete assimilation into American culture and aim to make Salsa an art form. However, later generations of Latinos also see Salsa as a means to connect with their cultural heritage. Because of the growing Latino population and commercialization of Latino music artists, the popularity of Salsa has also spread to non-Latinos, and many clubs and studios have opened (Borland, 2010, 469). Salsa style varies according to ethnicity and geographic location, but instructors throughout the country encourage diversity in people who choose to learn (Borland, 2010, 470-471). Although the dance is led by men, women are seen as important to Salsa and can demonstrate their independence and confidence through arriving to the clubs alone, adding style, and asking men to dance (Borland, 2010, 475).

Social Networks

Latino social networks within communities also provide support and protection of emotional and physical health, particularly through difficult times (Zambrana, 1995, 14). Family and social networks help relatives and friends solve problems with immigration, provide information about employment, and offer shelter to recent immigrants until they find their own homes (Zambrana, 1995, 5). “Life in Latin American countries is highly connected to the community, whether through important church and school functions, the ability to walk to a nearby market, or through socializing in the neighborhood. Good site selection can encourage strong social connections and foster more social interaction in the United States as well” (Cisneros, 2006, 136). Health and education services, locations for meetings, and large public gathering spaces provide places for people to meet outside of their homes. Forming business networks by placing stores and offices close together in mixed-use developments and next to residences creates more connections and a larger network extending through much of the neighborhood.

Community Design Accommodating the Latino Population

Many Latinos want to share their sense of culture with their new communities, and it is best to do this in a place where fostering a sense of community is easy (Cisneros, 2006, 89). Latino residents, like many others, enjoy compact communities with play space for children, interconnected sidewalks, walking and biking trails, soccer fields, small parks, plazas, and places to gather large groups. Names of places and architectural detailing that are reminiscent of cultural heritage also create an increased sense of place. Latinos view schools as important civic centers, so a community near a school where opportunities for interaction exist is ideal (Cisneros, 2006, 24-26). All of these components shape communities and how the new and growing Latino population could use them.

Issues + Barriers for Obtaining a High-Quality Education

As Xavier de Souza Briggs stated in his book, the *Geography of Opportunity*, “A growing share of black and Hispanic students, particularly in the big-city school systems, attend schools that are virtually all nonwhite, characterized by high student poverty rates, limited school resources, less experienced and credentialed teachers, less educated parents, high student turnover, overcrowded and disorderly classrooms, and a host of health and other problems” (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 32). Many students face barriers of cultural assimilation, poverty, loss of caregivers to deportation, and other barriers (Stratton, 2009). Economic prospects and future stable employment could be influenced by the mastery of English and closing the education gaps between Latinos and other races/ethnicities (NRC, 2006, 14).

As mentioned previously, the Latino population usually has the lowest rates of enrollment in higher education, the highest drop-out rates for high school and college, and the lowest educational attainment all racial and ethnic groups. Particularly in the southeast United States, no minority group exists into which the Hispanic

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population can easily assimilate (Bohon, MacPherson, + Atilas, 2005). Foreign-born non-Hispanics are four times more likely to have a college degree, with 36% of the population, compared to 9% for the Hispanic population. Three-fifths of Hispanic adults do not have a high school education compared to one-fifth of non-Hispanic immigrants, but second-generation Latinos reduce the percentages (NRC, 2006, 56). Because of the educational attainment, the foreign-born Hispanic population is concentrated at the bottom of the employment structure, with over 60% in low-wage jobs (NRC, 2006, 58). Parents and children make high educational goals, but many students do not matriculate in higher education, especially students whose parents without a college education (NRC, 2006, 179). It is necessary to identify main barriers to educational attainment, and to find flexible solutions to these problems.

The National Research Council suggests that some barriers include: bias from teachers of non-English-speaking students, relationships between Hispanics and non-Hispanic teachers, the large numbers of Latinos at low-performing schools, little encouragement to enroll in college preparatory courses, parents' proficiency in English, limited educational resources at home, the cost of higher education, and lack of knowledge of the United States education system (NRC, 2006, 8-9). Bohon, MacPherson, and Atilas (2005) studied focus groups in Georgia counties, many located around Atlanta. Their studies uncovered many of the same barriers to education for Hispanic students, many of which are interrelated, providing a challenge to addressing the issues. In addition to anti-immigration legislation, they identified six main issues, which are: immigrants do not understand the United States and Georgia education system, low parent involvement, little stability in residence, inadequate school resources for Latino students, discrimination in the school system, and little incentive to attain higher education (Bohon et al., 2005).

Assimilation, Segregation of Students + Schools

Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and immigrant families are separated more frequently from white residents, and these ethnic enclaves exacerbate issues of integration because students are not surrounded by native English speakers, cannot develop necessary social networks, and often do not have access to quality education and higher incomes (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 25). The Latino population is a racially stratified underclass with different levels of assimilation into American culture (Bohon et al., 2005). In recent years, many immigrants and Black residents are moving to older suburbs, but similar issues that central cities experienced are starting to affect the older suburbs, including low-quality schools (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 25).

Georgia Education Standards and System

Bohon et. al. stated, "Compared to other states, Georgia consistently ranks low on a number of educational measures. Standardized tests at the primary and secondary school levels are below the national average (Georgia Department of Education, 2003). In 2002 and 2003, Georgia ranked last in the nation on the Scholastic Assessment Test (Tofig, 2003). Georgia also has the lowest graduation rates of all the states, with

only 54% of the class of 1998 graduating from high school. The graduation rates for Latino students in this class were also the lowest in the country, with only 32% graduating (Salzer, 2001)” (Bohon et al., 2005, 48)

Bohon, MacPherson, and Atilas (2005) also stated that many immigrants do not understand the United States, and more specifically, the Georgia school systems. Some unrealized issues are the teachers’ and administrators’ expectations of the family and school links, parents’ hesitation to enroll their students in school because of financial issues, the emphasis on attendance, and the lack of support from surrounding neighbors to explain the process because most Latinos live in disadvantaged areas. Regarding the Georgia system specifically, some Latino parents were unaware of the necessary documents to complete, or that they had to be present to enroll their children in school. In the studies, it stated that truancy became an issue, and the language barriers created difficulty when notifying parents. To mitigate some of these issues, DeKalb and Hall County schools prepared immigrants by offering programs that demonstrate the school’s expectations (Bohon et al., 2005). Schools with high Latino and foreign-born populations should implement similar programs for parents and students at all grade levels. Providing documents in Spanish could also help parents understand the content of the documents in order to complete the necessary documentation.

Exposure to Pre-School Activities at Home

Hispanic children usually have less exposure to pre-school literacy activities at home. The National Research Council states that Hispanic children between the ages of three and five are less likely to have parents read to them, and that families primarily speaking Spanish have lower rates of literacy activities before formal schooling. Additionally, Latino families are less likely to tell stories and visit libraries, but this varies for families who primarily speak Spanish or English at home (NRC, 2006, 181-182). One important difference to note is that at all income levels, families with limited economic, educational, and social resources are less likely to participate in literacy activities prior to formal schooling. However, except for the highest income levels, the Latino sub-group is still the least likely to participate, generally explained by financial opportunity and language barriers. Typically, bilingual families are more assimilated into American culture and the children perform better in school, but families who only speak Spanish are more likely to be recent immigrants, be unaware of American education system, live in disadvantaged communities, and have lower levels of education and income (NRC, 2006, 182-183).

Some of the issues that Latino students face can be addressed as early as preschool because those years provide the foundation for social and cognitive development. Latino students are less likely than white or Black students to attend preschool. Earlier exposure to English and United States culture helps with assimilation, and could help the students provide communication between the school and parents in the future (NRC, 2006, 184). Less success in early schooling can be traced to family background factors, or a combination of factors, discussed in the previous paragraph (NRC, 2006, 185). A combination of the factors can make success more

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difficult, and schools can provide programs to alleviate the issues created from them. Schools can provide English as a Second Language classes for students and residents, literacy programs, translators for parents, offer advice for helping children with homework, before- and after-school care, and community outreach programs (NRC, 2006, 188). The extra provisions, though helpful for residents, could strain resources, so community and social service organizations should partner with the schools.

The programs should start early because when Hispanic children reach kindergarten, they could be behind in reading and math (NRC, 2006, 188). Sometimes teachers have preconceived perceptions of Latino students' abilities and initially rate their abilities lower than white students, but their expectations increase over time. However, this preconception could "set the stage" for lower expectations and lower performance. The early achievement gap can continue throughout primary, middle, and high school, particularly in reading ability. Generally, Latino students' reading and reading scores throughout education are lower than non-Hispanic white students, but they are usually slightly higher than Black students' scores. The achievement gap decreases around 12th grade, but some change could be attributed to high Latino dropout rates (NRC, 2006, 192-195).

Limited Latino Parent Involvement

Another issue Bohon, MacPherson, and Atilas (2005) identified was the low involvement of Latino parents. Teachers thought parents were not interested because they did not receive responses to their attempts at communication, but parents stated that language barriers made it embarrassing to talk to teachers. Distinct gender roles within the Latino culture also create cultural barriers. Mothers care for the children and are the link between home and school, and the fathers are rarely involved in school because of the need to work. Responsibilities of child care and no means of transportation make it difficult for mothers to attend conferences and go to the school when necessary (Bohon et al., 2005). School systems can find ways to mitigate the communication and cultural barriers through the initial outreach programs, English as a Second Language classes, finding alternative means of communication, and offering transportation options.

Stability of Residence

Another issue is the stability of residence for the Latino population (Bohon et al., 2005). This issue is realized when students switch neighborhoods, or when students' parents are migrant workers because their parents do not emphasize education as much as families moving to the United States permanently. Some migrant worker parents encourage their children to drop out of school to work and earn additional income for the family. Paperwork and documentation does not follow the families efficiently as they move between school districts, so schools experience difficulty placing students correct grade. Many teachers use college as a motivating factor, but it is ineffective for migrant workers' children because they will not live in the United States permanently (Bohon et al., 2005). Other motivating factors can mitigate some of these issues, which could

include vocational training and classes that offer specific skills apply to occupations students may obtain at their parents' request.

Limited School Resources

Schools often have limited resources and little support for the needs of Latino students (Bohon et al., 2005). Some schools only offer English classes to children of migrant workers, but they could be beneficial to other students as well. However, many schools do not have the funds to hire certified English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, especially to educate more students than those of migrant workers. Despite Georgia's requirements, Bohon et al. found that strong ESOL programs were the most commonly unmet necessity, particularly because education officials do not allocate enough time for students to learn the language. Schools also lack teachers who can speak Spanish, and who understand Latino culture. This category of teachers is needed to bridge the gap between the school and families, and to provide good role models for Latino students. Teachers should be educated on Latino culture to understand the differences, for example, the patriarchal nature of families (Bohon et al., 2005). Bohon's suggestions appear feasible and necessary. Although difficult to allocate resources and replace tenured teachers, schools should place an emphasis on hiring Latino and other minority educators.

Discrimination

Bohon et. al. also identified another issue experienced by Latino students, which is the real and imagined discrimination in the school system in the United States and in Georgia. Some parents believe that the teachers treat their children unfairly. The study found that teachers ignore children that are not white or can not speak English proficiently. For the Georgia system specifically, parents stated that it was difficult to adjust in a state that defines minority as "Black," leaving little room for understanding the needs of the Latino students (Bohon et al., 2005). The National Research Council also suggests that this discrimination against non-English-speaking students becomes a barrier (NRC, 2006). The educators' perception that Latinos will not finish school could promote a negative attitude, encouraging more students to drop out (Bohon et al., 2005). Although difficult to target because these issues vary teacher to teacher, school administrators should make an effort to educate their teachers about Latino culture and enforce discrimination regulations. However, Bohon, MacPherson, and Atilles' studies also discovered some bias in the Georgia schools in favor of educational attainment for Latinos. Typically, the inequality exists towards Black students. For example, some teachers expect Black students to perform worse than others, and categorize them as "lazy." Some perceive Latinos as industrious, and those teachers have few preconceived notions about their capabilities (Bohon et al., 2005).

Few Incentives to Continue Education

Bohon et. al. also stated that Latinos have little incentive to continue their education (Bohon et al., 2005). Young immigrant children perform better in school than older immigrant children because they can learn

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English quickly and usually adopt American culture. However, children who arrive in the United States in middle and high school have more difficulty learning English and assimilating. They often enter the United States with little formal education and are moved quickly from ESOL classes into normal classes, particularly when the school lacks resources. Additionally, written English exams present an obstacle because many students fail them multiple times, but the students are still required to complete all the classes, and in the end, cannot graduate. Some Latina students do not see a necessity for education because of the cultural gender roles and high teen pregnancy rates. Generally, Latinas are high achievers but tend to needs at home instead, and few graduate from Georgia high schools and attend college. Many counties in Georgia noted that Latinas are top students, but drop out to take care of their younger siblings, and in contrast to Black and white students, Latinas will drop out of school if pregnant. Conversely, some Latino men feel that they can make enough money to support their families without education, so many start working early (Bohon et al., 2005).

Access to Higher Education

Immigrants have little access to higher education for various reasons. Many Latino students have little knowledge of their opportunities because few counselors are trained well enough to explain college options. As a result, the students cannot acquire knowledge of grants, Latino-specific opportunities, and scholarships offered to Latinos and undocumented students. Counselors also struggle with assisting parents help their children because parents do not know how to fill out paperwork or which questions to ask. Many parents and students are also unaware of full scholarships based on Latino status. However, many scholarships, loans, or grants require citizenship, making some Latino students ineligible (Bohon et al., 2005). In Georgia specifically, Latinos can only receive HOPE scholarships if they are United States residents, even if they meet all of the other criteria (Bohon et al., 2005), and without this option, many cannot afford college. Additionally, some community and vocational colleges do not offer curriculums that Latino families value, such as automobile repair, electronics, and computer science (Bohon et al., 2005). Project Stepping Stone, a program in Indianapolis, Indiana, educates Latino high school students about their opportunities in college, provides scholarships, and hosts a week-long summer program at multiple universities each year to encourage more Latinos to aim for higher education goals (Project Stepping Stone, 2013). A program like this could be implemented at different grade levels for schools in Atlanta. Additionally, the DREAM Act (Gonzalez, 2010) and revising the HOPE requirements could alleviate some of the difficulty for undocumented students attending college. Schools with high Latino populations should educate the counselors about Latino opportunities, just as other minority opportunities are highlighted.

Social Characteristics + Poverty

Social characteristics can affect performance, especially in middle school because of the attachment to teachers and schools formed at that age. This sense of belonging is more difficult to attain in large schools with large classes, which Hispanic students typically attend (NRC, 2006, 195). In 2001, Hispanics were 25% of the

students in inner city schools throughout the country. Hispanics also “disproportionately attend schools with the highest levels of poverty, as measured by the proportion of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch, and are enrolled in the most highly segregated schools” (NRC, 2006, 197). According to the NRC report, three-quarters of Latino students attend schools with a minority population greater than 50%, and 35% of Latinos attend schools with a minority population greater than 90%. In addition, Latinos are more likely to attend schools with inexperienced or uncertified teachers, and many schools do not have Hispanic teachers, which creates difficulty relating to teachers and viewing them as role models (NRC, 2006, 197). When students gain a sense of belonging, they are more likely to value their education and participate in class. The teacher-student relationship is important because the students must accept teachers as credible, which could be difficult to do with white middle class teachers in urban schools. Teachers that do not understand cultural differences could limit the students’ success, and many teachers lack the skills to engage the students, causing stress for the students, leading to lower expectations and lack of value placed on education (NRC, 2006, 198-199). Hiring more Hispanic teachers, principals, and administrators could become necessary.

Transition Between Schools

The transition to high school can be difficult for Latino and other minority students, particularly in urban areas because of the lack of certainty about which school they will attend. If students are placed in higher-level classes in middle school, they are more prepared for high school, could perform better on standardized tests, and have a higher chance of attending college. However, Hispanics are less likely to take advanced classes in middle school, leading to uncertainty when choosing classes in high school, and potentially trusting teachers’ suggestions without question. Because of this issue, assistance with the curriculum for both students and parents should occur before high school (NRC, 2006, 200-201).

Latino high school completion rates have risen, but job prospects are lacking because the minimum requirement for many stable jobs is a bachelor’s degree. Many Hispanic students will enter the labor market immediately after high school, potentially leading to unstable employment and low pay (Levy 1995 qtd. in NRC, 2006, 211). Over half of Latino students plan to attend a four-year college, but they are more likely than other subgroups to attend two-year colleges, and only about 25% of those who attend a two-year college, move onto a four-year institution (Fry 2004 qtd. in NRC, 2006, 213). Transition programs between the two types of institutions or between high school and higher education could help more Latino students attend four-year universities (NRC, 2006, 213).

Curriculum + Class and Tutoring Offerings

The school’s overall curriculum and class schedule affect the classes that students are able to take. This is important because “courses taken in high school better predict who attends college than family background, school characteristics, or educational expectations. Course selection decisions are in turn more influenced by

student academic ability and prior achievement than by family background characteristics, such as parents' educational attainment (Stevenson et. al, 1994)" (NRC, 2006, 201). Hispanics are less likely than white and Black students to take advanced math and science courses, which is a concern because math performance is a major predictor of college attendance (NRC, 2006, 201). Additionally, minorities, other than Asian students, are less likely to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. In 2002, 9% of AP test takers were Latino, and in 2001, Hispanics made up 9% of SAT takers, but 14% of all juniors and seniors in high school. Latino students' scores were also lower than white students and Asians, but higher than Black students; however, Latinos are the least likely of all the groups to apply to college (NRC, 2006, 203-204).

The Latino students' high school drop-out rate is higher than Black and white students' rates because of the number of immigrants who never enroll in high school. In 2001, 43.1% of foreign-born Latinos did not complete high school, compared to 15% of United States-born Latinos (US Dept. of Education 2004a, qtd. in NRC, 2006, 208). Additionally, in 2001, the national rate for Latino high school completion was 64%, much lower than for whites (92%). This number is typical of urban schools with many low-income minority residents (US Dept. of Education 2004a, qtd. in NRC, 2006, 209). Intervention programs in low-performing schools help link graduation to college matriculation by including college-level courses and programs, after-school tutoring, and SAT preparation classes. The programs can be very helpful, but are criticized for not acknowledging that the most talented students are more likely to seek help and programs (NRC, 2006, 210-211).

Planning Policy and Education

Discipline + High Expectations for Students

One example of effectiveness in school-specific policy is the School of International Business of the Kearny High School community in San Diego, California, part of the San Diego Unified Schools. The school opened in 2004, experienced much uncertainty with the budget and little support from the school district. The school survives because of the academic programs and strict discipline policy. Kearny High School managed to retain students from the neighborhood, even with the option to choose the voluntary enrollment program to attend other schools. The school must constantly justify their effectiveness and necessity to exist. This school, with 460 students, is located in one of the poorest service areas, and 79% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch. Latinos make up 45% of the student body, and 38% of the students are English- learners. This school "builds a college-going culture," and the academic performance index has increased over 200 points since it opened. For example, for the California High School Exit Exam in 2010, 93% of the English-learners passed the math exam on the first attempt, compared to the district average of 49%, and 70% passed the English exam on the first attempt, compared to the district average of 33%. For Latinos specifically, 98% passed math the first time, compared to a 75% district average, and 84% passed the English portion the first time, compared to a 70% district average (Diaz-Booz, 2011).

Kearny High School emphasizes discipline for both dress code and behavior, and this is enforced through lines

of communication between home and school, creating accountability for actions. The school also experiences low teacher turnover partly due to the strong discipline policy. The teachers are qualified, but also have an “edge” about them that allows the students to identify with them. The school also partners with Mesa College, a local community college, with a fast-track program. Every senior is required to take at least one college class, and many earn more than 20 credits. This program saves the high school money, which can be allocated to the education of underclassmen (Diaz-Booz, 2011)

Neighborhood Involvement

The Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School is a case study of school policy and neighborhood involvement. The K-8 school has with two campuses, an elementary school and middle school merged to create one school in the Grant Park and Ormewood Park neighborhoods of Atlanta. The Elementary school opened in 2002 because of neighborhood activism, and the middle school opened in 2005. The families in the neighborhood also participated in the merger of the schools, and the teachers work together to create a continuous curriculum. Parental involvement in the school and their children’s education increases because of the nine-year investment in the schools (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2013).

Parents started the Neighborhood Charter Elementary School because they wanted their children in a high quality, urban, and diverse school with community involvement. Volunteers educated neighbors in Spanish and English about the benefits of charter schools and community meetings were held. Three years of outreach, organization, research, and work with Atlanta educators led to the formation of a charter school. The community passed the charter petition in September 2000, and the Atlanta Board of Education and Georgia Board of Education passed it in Spring 2001. The school originally started in the old Slaton Elementary School building on Grant Street in August 2002, an unused APS school, and volunteers rehabilitated the building. The Slaton building was reconstructed after a fire in 2003, and classes resumed in that building in February 2005 (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2013). The Neighborhood Charter School student demographics for 2009 were 24% Black, 3% Hispanic, 62% White, and 18% qualified for free/reduced lunch (Georgia DOE, 2012g).

The initiative for the Atlanta Charter Middle School was started in 2004 by parents and teachers, and by 2005, the city and state Boards of Education approved the charter. The school is able to serve students throughout Atlanta, but the focus is on those students who live in southeast Atlanta. The school initially shared facilities with the elementary school, but in 2006, the school was able to purchase and moved to the former Annie E. West Elementary school in Ormewood Park. The middle school has earned the Georgia Department of Education Title I “Distinguished School” each year, which means it is a school with a high percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch, but still exceeds academic performance goals (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2013). The student demographics in the 2009-2010 year, were 53%

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Black, 4% Hispanic, 33% White, and 38% qualified for free/reduced lunch (Georgia DOE, 2012f). In Fall 2009, the community worked with a consultant to create an official merger of the schools, and in March 2011, the Georgia State Board of Education approved the petition (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2013).

People who want to address a certain population, such as racial or ethnic groups, usually start charter schools. A Harvard study by the Civil Rights Project found that 70% of Black students in charter schools attended highly segregated schools with 90% or more minority student enrollment, in comparison to 34% of Black students in public schools. Hispanic students have similar rates for charter (42%) and public (37%) schools for students that attend highly segregated schools (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 33). However, community involvement sets a precedent for other schools to encourage the accountability of residents to invest in their neighborhood schools.

Accountability Systems + Partnerships

A two-way system of accountability is necessary to address many multi-faceted educational problems. The schools should be accountable to their communities, and the communities should be accountable to the schools (McKoy, Vincent, + Bierbaum, 2011). The community needs an understanding of the educational options available, such as school choices, programs, student needs, and school assignment policies. Now, more options for schools exist: charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, public schools, vouchers, and the dispersal of students to other neighborhood schools to integrate them economically and racially. Education about the different options could affect where parents enroll their children.

In order to achieve systems of accountability, it is best for schools and planners to reach out to leaders in education, such as superintendents, school boards, and senior staff. As a way to develop a relationship between the schools and communities, joint-use agreements could be written for school facilities, gyms, playgrounds, classrooms, and after-school programs. The agreements ensure that investments made in communities and schools are leveraged more efficiently. Studying demographics helps determine the needs for social services and community amenities. As previously discussed, students of different ethnic backgrounds, English-learners, and low-income families have certain supports they will need in and out of school (McKoy et al., 2011)

Partnerships and collaboration within the community also provide the opportunity to form links to internships within engineering, arts, media, and health career fields for high school students. These links enable people to recognize the importance of schools in their communities, and contractual agreements should ensure that the engagement is sustained. The school and the community should formally reach and adopt a shared vision for the, school, community, and region, encouraging further investment. Partnerships allow schools to leverage diverse public and private resources for support (McKoy et al., 2011).

The partnerships and processes should be organized and made accountable to each other with a memorandum of understanding that describes shared priorities, resources, and standing committees between the agencies to support the structure. Another way to share facilities is to create a joint-powers authority that has independent authority with a board of directors representing the different agencies. The collaborations should be studied to measure the change in educational attainment, community health, and economic stability, but the documentation and evaluation should also ensure continued investment from the public and private entities involved (McKoy et al., 2011).

Planners + School Districts

School jurisdictional boundaries do not always align with city and regional boundaries. Planners and school officials could also aim to align school boundaries, typically based on neighborhoods, with the planning boundaries, usually based on Census tracts to simplify future planning endeavors. Planners can engage school districts in planning to nurture and improve partnerships with local and regional agencies. These partnerships also help with joint programs and shared facilities and connect to educational programs. Planners should contact school districts when proposing and planning housing units, new parks adjacent to schools, bike and pedestrian infrastructure plans, and shared facility utilization. To increase community and school official involvement, planners should ensure that meetings do not overlap with school days and important events on the school calendars. They should also allow students to participate in the planning process as part of a learning initiative. The participation could become part of the curriculum and help the planning process by introducing new ideas and creativity. This tactic is especially beneficial in areas with low-income and minority students. Inclusive and integrated planning should become normal practice because more permanent structures could evolve to maintain the practice (McKoy et al., 2011).

Spatial Design of Communities + Schools

Quality educational opportunities are important for the health and economic strength of communities. People face many obstacles, especially in low-income neighborhoods with large minority populations, including substandard housing and high poverty rates. Cross sector collaboration could foster social equity. Public education should be included in sustainable community design and planning by using available resources efficiently to transform disadvantaged neighborhoods and low-attaining educational systems (McKoy et al., 2011). Out-of-school programs greatly contribute to the success of schools and attract an “economically and racially diverse group of residents” (McKoy et al., 2011). Many national and state-level organizations have worked on school siting regulations and how they can affect access to the school and education. The agencies include the EPA, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Conservancy. School siting, community design, and school policies can shape the access to education.

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School Siting

The EPA, Georgia Conservancy, and Department of Education drafted improved school siting regulations for the State of Georgia that focus on community-centered schools. The document states that the benefits are: higher student achievement with smaller classes and schools; decreases in obesity and increases in health from walking and biking to school; availability of after-hours activities and non-school activities; increased property values leading to a higher tax base; less gasoline consumed from driving to school; and that renovations can be cheaper than acquiring new land. In 2001-2002, school spending was above average for affluent neighborhoods, and well below the average for minority and low-income schools. The current large site standards for school buildings were created in the 1950's because of the encouragement of suburban ideals, leading many states to adopt minimum acreage guidelines. The current Georgia standards (school systems can request variances) are:

Elementary school: 5 acres + 1 acre for every 100 students

Middle School: 12 acres + 1 acre for every 100 students

High School: 20 acres + 1 acre for every 100 students

Generally, historic school renovation projects receive less money than new construction, but they are only given the amount that it would cost to build a new school. Schools that are not considered "historic" are not funded for rehabilitation unless the total cost is less than the state's reimbursement rates. Schools must also maintain a local education facilities plan with five-year updates, but no requirements exist for community outreach or specifying who should be involved in the process (GeorgiaBikes! and Georgia Safe Routes to School Network, 2011).

A large portion of total education spending, which taxpayers pay, is allocated to the transportation cost. In 1980-1981, the national total was 4.4 billion dollars spent on transportation, and by 2006-2007, the total increased drastically to 19.9 billion. In Georgia, public elementary and secondary schools are funded by local and state appropriations, and the federal government does not support the operational costs. Most districts spend 10% on operational costs, and 90% on personnel costs, making it almost necessary to reduce personnel during tough financial times. Schools farther from the city spend more on transportation (GeorgiaBikes! and Georgia Safe Routes to School Network, 2011).

The Georgia Conservancy offers a number of recommendations to improve school siting regulations. The first is to eliminate the minimum acreage requirements and set maximum limits instead. The second is to eliminate the minimum school size requirements, reducing maintenance costs and increasing the ability to walk to school. School siting should be a local decision that involves the public's input. The Conservancy advises that districts should use existing school buildings because save money and land. Another recommendation is to have multiple uses for the buildings, like athletic and recreational uses. Multiple uses can increase community involvement, focus schools as centers of the community, increase the use of the facilities that are under-

utilized, and allow partnerships with public and private organizations. This can be accomplished through an agreement with the school district and municipality. Currently, no school in Georgia has one of these agreements (GeorgiaBikes! and Georgia Safe Routes to School Network, 2011).

Challenges + Opportunities to Link Education and Sustainable Communities

Many institutions operate in silos. Schools and communities are connected, but planners and educators do not collaborate, resulting in redundant use of resources and inefficient service and program allocation. Planners and schools do not collaborate on school siting, school renovations, school attendance boundaries, transportation, and family housing developments. Because of this, educators do not realize the planned future investment and revitalization in the community beforehand, and close the schools. The two systems also have different planning districts and years: schools make five to ten-year capital plans, and planning agencies make at least 20-year plans. Finally, many policymakers do not know where to start on the collaboration process and lack knowledge of others' work (McKoy et al., 2011).

Persistent poverty and inequality within neighborhoods create barriers to providing transportation infrastructure, quality affordable housing, municipal amenities like parks, and access to good schools and stable jobs. Low-income neighborhoods usually do not have child care, pre-school, healthy environments, quality affordable housing, high-paying jobs, and the schools may lack social or academic support. Economically integrated schools would help link education and community planning, but schools often remain segregated. Policy mechanisms, like inclusionary zoning, exist to create mixed-income communities and economically-integrated schools. Other issues also result because students can attend schools outside of their neighborhoods. Magnet, charter, and private schools attract students from urban and suburban areas, but students are also assigned to schools outside their neighborhoods for the purpose of integrating schools. Community or full-service schools that offer many community uses and social, health, and academic services, can help make schools the center of the community and could work well in conjunction with inclusionary zoning (McKoy et al., 2011).

Housing

Increasing access to stable, high-quality, affordable housing benefits students, teachers, schools, and school districts. Many people experience difficulty finding safe and affordable places to live, which disproportionately affects minorities and low-income students, resulting in low achievement and high drop-out rates. Mixed-income housing initiatives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) aim to de-concentrate poverty to provide affordable housing options (see Housing section for more detail). Providing a mix of housing options offers affordable housing for teachers and other school staff, resulting in the possible retention of high-quality faculty. However, increasing the housing stock and options can also cause problems with enrollment because of the need for accommodating new students and additional funding. Public-private partnerships, joint-use agreements for school facilities, and increased development can lead to the

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development of family-oriented housing, commercial uses, educational uses, and recreational uses (McKoy et al., 2011).

Community + School Services

Increased regional mobility and access to viable and necessary community services can also lead to higher quality schools and retention of qualified teachers, particularly for schools in low-income and minority neighborhoods. Communities need jobs with advancement opportunities in order to maintain a stable population. Health care options, access to healthy food, and recreation facilities are also necessary parts of the community, and these uses could be combined with the school uses, creating a stronger connection to the school itself. Grocery stores offering fresh fruits and vegetables should be in close proximity to schools and communities. Childcare is another important social service for parents, and new community development and regional planning efforts have started to make it a component. Many housing developments include childcare facilities on-site or are operated through shared-use agreements. Childcare facilities allow parents to find stable employment and can help children learn at a younger age (McKoy et al., 2011).

Educational organizations and programs, counseling, and supportive services in the community also increase the future educational attainment for students. Quality early childhood and pre-Kindergarten programs, which could be funded by private providers, the state, or federal Head Start programs, prepare children for higher achievement in elementary school. Educational programs and encouragement to attend college should extend to elementary and middle school. It is important to maintain these programs because they prepare all students, and students typically become disengaged in middle school. After-school programs could teach students in art, music, and technology, or provide opportunities for recreation. One option for accommodating all of these educational programs is to collaborate with community colleges; however, family and academic programs outside of the schools should complement academic goals of the schools (McKoy et al., 2011).

Funding for community and educational services can come from municipal, county, state, federal funding, non-profits, and private foundations. HUD can provide public funding to local education agencies and housing agencies for childcare. Private and philanthropic organizations offer funding and grants for a variety of needs (McKoy et al., 2011).

Open Space + Cultural Amenities

Family-oriented amenities attract people to neighborhoods, which could increase the stability of neighborhoods surrounding the schools. Cultural amenities and open spaces for playing and physical activity should be a system in communities linked by pedestrian infrastructure. Cultural amenities provide places for learning and community engagement. The open spaces provide additional venues for learning and community support for the schools because they can hold larger events. All of the elements should be used by the schools, and

connected to the schools through pedestrian infrastructure and clear transportation networks (McKoy et al., 2011).

Stormwater management features can also become part of the community and the school's curriculum. For example, students at Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School on Northside Drive, across from the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, painted rain barrels to collect rainwater outside the school. The students spent a year on the rain barrel project, and Department of Corrections VIPER Team, which adopted the school, and the Atlanta Office of Sustainability assisted the students and teachers. They started with six barrels and plan to have 22 barrels decorated and installed around the school by the end of the 2012-2013 school year. The teachers will use the rain barrels to teach lessons about water resources and the many ways that rainwater can be used for daily needs. The U.S. Green Building Council of Georgia, Ernst and Young, Coca-Cola, and the Home Depot sponsored the class project (Pendered, 2012).

Physical Condition of School Building + Schools as Centers of Community

Rainwater (2011) stated, "Unfortunately, for far too many of America's students and schools, this is the reality. The average school is 42 years old. Inefficiency costs the average school approximately \$100,000 a year, money that could be spent on teachers, education materials, books or computers. Right now, 14 million students — over a quarter of all students — attend schools considered below standard or dangerous" (Rainwater, 2011).

Poorly maintained school buildings are associated with low educational attainment. Members of the community should help the schools assess the building's infrastructure and list improvements necessary. Because of the multi-use function of schools in communities, building and site quality need to be maintained. Rather than constructing new buildings, communities should first ensure adequate rehabilitation of existing schools. They should emphasize the importance of keeping the sites safe, attractive, and useful for quality education. Low-income and minority students often attend schools in the worse conditions, so it is especially important to offer those communities are support for building maintenance. Buildings should also accommodate the enrollment increases that come with developing additional housing options within existing neighborhoods (McKoy et al., 2011).

Transportation

Transportation issues affect access to schools, housing, and civic spaces within the communities, so neighborhoods should offer options for walking, biking, driving, and taking public transit. These issues are particularly important if students attend charter or magnet schools outside their immediate neighborhoods. In 1970, half of all students walked or biked to school; however, as the dependence on cars increased, the percentage of students walking and biking to school decreased to 13% in 2000. Now, more than half of all

students arrive to schools in private cars, which could be partially due to the neighborhoods' infrastructure. Improvements to sidewalks, bike lanes, street lights, and street furniture could increase the safety and help students travel to school with different options. Schools should not be sited on large parcels of land because of the transportation and access issues causing the increased dependence on cars to arrive at school. Some transportation issues can be alleviated by holding different activities at the same place, requiring less travel between different facilities for community uses. Safe Routes to School is an organization of students, parents, teachers, and local communities that aims to identify and provide more opportunities for students to walk or bike to school (McKoy et al., 2011). Benteen Elementary School created a Safe Routes to School plan with the City of Atlanta Department of Public Works and PEDS in 2008, described on page 64 (PEDS and Benteen Elementary School, 2008).

Trains and busses can be used as safe, affordable, and reliable modes of travel for students. Local bus routes and schedules could be re-scheduled to align with school hours if needed. Transit options also help transportation to after-school activities, such as internships, clubs, jobs, sports, and recreation activities. Schools and transportation agencies can create incentives, such as low-cost or free transit passes to students and low-income riders, for students to walk, bike, or take transit to travel to school. Attractive and practical urban design elements make the areas appear safe and vibrant, further encouraging these modes of transportation (McKoy et al., 2011).

Urban Design Elements

Urban design elements can improve the overall attractiveness of the communities and schools and provide incentives to use alternative modes of transportation to school. Streetscape improvements and a strong network of pathways between facilities encourage students and staff to walk or bike to school. Parents can also walk their children to school on their way to work, assuming employment opportunities are within close proximity. Siting schools in strategic locations, like near recreation centers and locations for jobs and internships, can help make them the center of the community. By contrast, adding such development around existing schools may also accomplish this goal (McKoy et al., 2011).

The Effects of Housing on Access to Education

Throughout the United States there is a “geographic concentration of school failure” (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 29), and usually governments focus on schools, teachers, and resources, but not larger issues such as, race, income, and housing segregation. A 1966 study by James Coleman showed that school resources did not affect the differences for educational achievement between whites and minorities as much as racial composition, parents' background, and resources at home (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 30). The increase in home values in neighborhoods is reflected in the change and improvement of school test scores. Because of this, in high-performing school districts, homeowners without children benefit from the effects of good schools on their

property values (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 31). Nearly 40% of students in public schools are minorities. Latino students are the most segregated by race, income, and language, Asian students are the most integrated, and Black segregation has recently increased. Segregation can increase because of school choice programs that allow parents to transfer their children to other schools, charter schools, private schools, and magnet schools (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 32). De Souza Briggs stated, “School segregation increased in the 1990’s. Between-district segregation became the dominant component of racial segregation in education, underscoring the effect of unequal housing choice on educational inequality; and a growing share of the nation’s children left assigned public schools for charter schools and other chosen alternatives. Minorities making these choices were more likely to attend segregated schools than were their counterparts in assigned public schools” (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 36).

Community + Student Population

The available resources and demographics of the student population correlate with the quality of schools. How children influence one another affects how much they will attain. Schools with “economically-advantaged” children have more educational advantages over schools with high populations of “economically-disadvantaged” children because of the access to social networks and connections. At 75% of the schools in the United States, the majority of the students are from middle class households, and in the other 25%, the majority are from low-income households. Usually, that 25% of schools fails to educate children to high levels of achievement. Additionally, entry into elite universities is correlated with family income. For example, 76% of higher-income students earn bachelor’s degrees, and only 4% of lower-income students reach this level (Macedo, 2011).

Zoning + Housing

Zoning laws control many aspects of the local housing and often exclude low-income populations. The lower-income population is usually located in the former “working class” neighborhoods of central cities. For example, in suburban areas with high-quality schools, a two-acre lot size minimum makes moving to those areas unaffordable. Additionally, restrictions on the amount and location of apartment buildings present issues with affordability. Property laws and zoning regulations give communities the ability to “zone-out” low-income populations, making the communities and schools much more divided by class. The results are much more harmful for those students that are concentrated in poverty, and they encompass education, crime, health, and transportation. Economically integrated schools do not negatively affect the middle- and higher-income students, but integration could help the lower-income students. Redrawing school district lines to reach other neighborhood areas could reduce class segregation. Macedo also addressed other ways to resolve the issues, including local control of schools, larger voucher programs for disadvantaged students, and requiring schools to serve a certain percentage of low-income school voucher holders (Macedo, 2011).

Review of Literature

Latino Homeownership

Many minorities, including immigrants, have more housing mobility, which could, eventually, improve the neighborhoods and schools (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 36). Immigration and migration affect the racial and economic profile of people in neighborhoods, and the housing market in those areas (de Souza Briggs, 2005, 27). In 2010, 44% of Georgia Latino households owned homes, an increase from 2000, but the gap between all Georgia households still exists because nearly two-thirds of all Georgia residents own homes (Andes, 2012).

Subsidized Housing

Assisted households are more likely to live near low-performing schools than other households. Residents who utilize one of the four types of housing assistance (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Section 8, and Public Housing) typically have access to an elementary school with low rankings in state standards. The following list compares the quality of the median schools nearest each type of housing assistance in Atlanta and the nation:

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Holders:**

- o National: 12th - 36th percentile
- o Atlanta: 23rd percentile

- **Public Housing:**

- o National: 6th – 18th percentile
- o Atlanta: 31st Percentile

- **Project-based Section 8:**

- o National: 10th – 30th percentiles
- o Atlanta: 19th percentile

- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit:**

- o National: 20th-40th percentile
- o Atlanta: 19th percentile (Ellen + Horn, 2012).

The largest assistance program is the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), which helps 2.5 million households. The Section 8 Voucher Program helps 2 million households, 1.2 million of which include children. (Ellen + Horn, 2012). In general, voucher holders do not live closer to higher performing schools than households receiving other forms of housing assistance. The median school closest to public housing performs lower than the median schools nearest to all households, renters, and households living below the poverty line. Residents of LIHTC units are able to attend schools that are more advantaged. For example, 33% of LIHTC recipients live close to schools with an 80% or higher rate for free/reduced lunch, compared to 41% of Section 8 Housing Choice voucher recipients, and 53% of public housing tenants. Nearly 33% of Public Housing and Project-based Section 8 households live close to schools that are ranked in the bottom 10th percentile.

Assisted households live near better schools in smaller Metropolitan Statistical Areas (Ellen + Horn, 2012). Section 8 voucher holders and public housing residents live in neighborhoods with lower-performing schools than renters and low-income households in general. Housing choice voucher recipients also live near lower performing and income schools than project-based Section 8 and LIHTC recipients. The reasons for the difference include: the lack of affordable housing options in neighborhoods with high-performing schools; the lack of information given to the recipients to allow them to find better neighborhoods, and administrative issues causing difficulty with moving into higher-performing schools. Section 8 Housing Choice voucher recipients are more likely to be non-white, who, historically, have access to lower-performing schools due to residential discrimination and segregation. The median school closest to voucher holders that are white ranks 20 percentile points higher than the schools nearest voucher holders that are Black, and 15 percentile points higher than Latino voucher holders. Overall, the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch near white voucher holders is 57%, but for Black and Hispanic voucher holders, the eligibility is around 80%. For the overall population, the median school closest to white households with children ranks 41 percentile points higher than for the median school closest to Black households, and 31 percentile points higher than the median school near Hispanic households (Ellen + Horn, 2012).

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined as a household spending 30% or less of their annual income on housing, assuming that if they spend more, they can not afford food, health insurance, necessities, and transportation. For single-family dwelling units, affordable housing is defined as spending 30% or less on housing for people making 80% of the median income of the area. For multi-family housing, affordable housing is defined as spending a maximum 30% of income on housing for people making 50% of the median income of the area (Cisneros, 2006, 130). At Garden Hills Elementary, 81% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch and at Benteen Elementary, 100% qualify for free/reduced lunch, demonstrating that basic needs, like food for children, are not met, and that designing affordable housing could be of assistance (Georgia DOE, 2012b; 2012c).

Creating sustainable affordable housing is necessary because of the growing Latino population throughout the United States and in Atlanta. Homeownership is important to Latino families, but many cannot afford to purchase a home immediately and need time to become comfortable and earn money (Cisneros, 2006, 5). It is possible to work with non-profit organizations, religious groups, and government agencies to develop affordable housing (Cisneros, 2006, 129). A combination of design and sustainable practices allows for a reduction in long-term costs for the homeowners and renters. Applying good design principles and sustainable practices to multi-family housing is more cost effective than single-family housing because it allows for more open public space, less resource consumption, and lower costs for land because of higher densities (Cisneros, 2006, 135).

Review of Literature

Some New Urbanism practices could allow for more affordable housing options because of the overall community design and lower development costs. Site selection, street and lot design, and the construction of homes are important components to address in sustainable design. Housing becomes more affordable in compact developments linked by sidewalks and bike trails because it allows for more pedestrian mobility, which means residents spend less on transportation, and developers save money on infrastructure costs. Nearby amenities and services can encourage community connections and affordability. Making smaller lot sizes for single-family homes saves money for home-buyers and renters, but multi-family housing is still less costly to build. Developers can also save money by reducing street widths, extending the lower costs to residents (Cisneros, 2006, 135-137). Green tactics for home location to maximize the amount of sunlight and natural ventilation for the unit make it more energy efficient and affordable. Using landscape systems for storm water runoff instead of typical infrastructure saves on construction costs, and saves on utility bills for the homeowners (Cisneros, 2006, 142-144). All of these methods create more sustainable communities because compact development impacts the environment less and saves money for the developers, businesses, and residents. These guidelines apply to Latinos' preferences for communities and could dictate community design to create more affordable housing that addresses cultural heritage for the growing population. Offering Latinos and residents a variety of options in affordable housing allows them to reach goals of homeownership and improves the neighborhood.

Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Communities

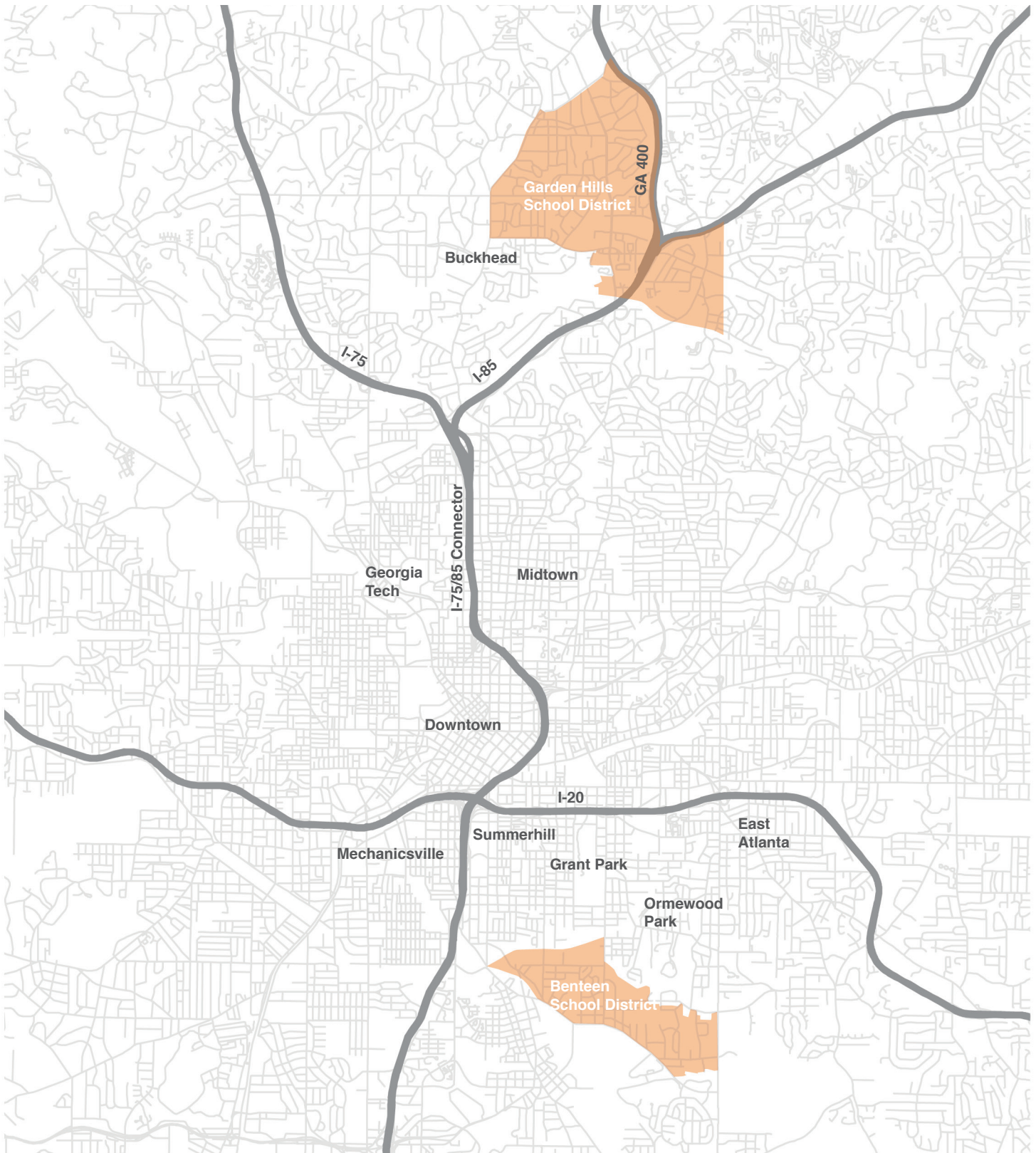
Fall Creek Place is a 26-block neighborhood on the near north side of Indianapolis that includes affordable housing. The goal of the project is to make a mixed-income and diverse community with many housing choices, recreational opportunities, and commercial uses. HUD grants require that over 50% of the housing units be designated for those earning 80% or less of the area's median income, and the city does not want to displace existing residents. The four million dollar Home Ownership Zone grant required 265 homes to be built, but over 300 home sites and 46 rehabilitation opportunities were identified. Other goals are to create viable retail nodes, add neighborhood parks, make gateways to the community, and improve infrastructure (Palladino, 2003, 12). The city provided subsidies and incentives to accommodate the mixed-income housing requirements, and to gain the private business enterprises. Infrastructure improvements included new streets, sidewalks, alleys, street lights, landscape elements, and curbs (Palladino, 2003, 13). Design considerations included the balance of affordable homes with quality design, and that low-income and market-rate units could not differ in appearance (Palladino, 2003, 14). Historic homes are also rehabilitated and included in the streetscape (Palladino, 2003, 13). This project allows for mixed-income housing for many residents and attempts to limit the displacement of existing residents. The implementation of commercial and residential uses and public parks also make more vibrant communities. By making specific guidelines about the appearance of homes, and making them indistinguishable, communities can thrive without social stigmas.

The Olympic Legacy Program in Atlanta, which focused on HOPE VI grants to demolish public housing

projects and construct mixed-income communities, also included the replacement of old elementary schools. Early Education and Family Centers were added to both Centennial Place and Villages of East Lake (East Lake Foundation, 2012). Centennial Elementary replaced Fowler Elementary, which served Techwood and Clark Howell Homes. At Fowler Elementary, prior to replacement, 99% of the students qualified for free/reduced lunch (Newman 2002). Today, 64% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch (Georgia DOE, 2012h). A partnership between Georgia Tech, Coca-Cola, the Bank of America, Bell South, the YMCA, and All Saints Episcopal Church created Centennial Elementary. The scores in standardized tests increased within the first year, the curriculum focuses on STEM education, and the YMCA provides before- and after-school care. In addition, the YMCA allows the school to use the recreational facilities for physical education classes (Newman, 2002).

Charles R. Drew Elementary in East Lake Meadows became a charter school with funding from the Atlanta Public Schools and the East Lake Community Foundation (Newman, 2002). The school originally served kindergarten through fifth grade, and now serves children aged three to eighth grade (Drew Charter School, 2012). This school extended the school day length, and made a longer school year (Newman 2002). Today, 74% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch (Georgia DOE, 2012i). In 2000-2001, the charter school saw reading scores more than double, and 19% of the students were at or above grade level at the start of the year, and by the end of the year, 43% were. The school is also attached to the East Lake Family YMCA that offers education programs, media centers, community areas, and recreational facilities (Abt Associates, 2003). Children from the new mixed-income apartments were originally given preference for enrollment and other spots were filled by lottery. Teachers and volunteers provide individualized instruction to address the educational attainment issues (Newman, 2002).

Barriers to education, Latino cultural accommodations, school policies, spatial community and school design, and housing options are all important considerations for improving the quality of education. The remainder of this paper uses this research and analysis from site visits to document existing conditions, offer recommendations for policy change, and design concepts for the Garden Hills and Benteen neighborhoods in Atlanta.



Site Locations Map

SITE VISITS - GARDEN HILLS

Schools and Community Resources (see diagrams, page 74 and page 76)

Garden Hills Elementary School is located adjacent to the Atlanta International School, and it feeds into North Atlanta High School. Frankie Allen Park, Garden Hills Park, which has a pool, Alexander Park, and other small parks are in the immediate neighborhood area. Residents near Peachtree Road have access to the Publix grocery store and many other businesses. The businesses and retail include chain restaurants, haircut salons, gold buying/selling, Barnes + Noble Booksellers, fast food chains, banks, an alterations business, Chinese restaurants, an optometrist's office, a Walgreen's, tanning salons, H.R. Block, and Asset Management.

Housing (see diagram page 75)

A mix of housing exists around the school with multi-family housing near the school (apartments of different types), single-family homes of multiple sizes, and townhomes. The buildings are a mix of old and new. Some single-family homes are very expensive, and some townhomes are listed for \$400,000 or more in the fairly affordable multi-family area. Much of the multi-family housing area is between the school and Peachtree Road and southeast of the Southern Railroad lines. Some high-rise housing exists, but most of the buildings in the residential area are between two and four stories.

Transportation + Circulation (see diagram page 77)

Garden Hills Elementary School is not near the MARTA Lindbergh, Lenox, or Buckhead Stations. The residential area is fairly walkable with many sidewalks, but weaving, tree-lined, narrow, and curving streets create the larger blocks. The topography changes fairly drastically throughout the Garden Hills neighborhood. It is difficult to access the school and navigate around the Atlanta International School by driving because of closed access drives. Peachtree Road has high traffic volumes and many impatient drivers, making it an undesirable place to walk and cross the street. Strip commercial developments with expansive parking and large office and residential towers front Peachtree Road.

Latino Presence

While exploring the area, the Hispanic presence is noticeable as a dominant population. However, it is unclear if many Hispanic businesses exist directly adjacent to the school.

Lindbergh City Center + Cheshire Bridge Road Area

Lindbergh has traces of transit-oriented development, but much of the area does not feel walkable. Many apartment complexes front Piedmont Road, and the larger department stores are along smaller side streets. No public green space exists. Confusing and wide streets make Cheshire Bridge Road undesirable for walking, biking, and even driving. Many types of commercial and some multi-family units are in the area, but no park space. Both areas are separated from the rest of the school district by the railroad, raising the question about why those students attend Garden Hills. A more diverse population is noticeable in these areas.

GARDEN HILLS DESCRIPTION

Opportunities

Opportunities for infill development exist along Peachtree Road between existing buildings or on parking lots. New developments are currently under construction on the northern end of the area (north of Pharr Road NE). Additional opportunities for development occur on parking lots that front neighborhood side streets. The current mix of uses, densities, and building types allow for the integration of creative and varied development in the area. Some of the neighborhood streets, particularly those leading to the school and parks, need sidewalk improvements or sidewalks in general. The areas around the Lindbergh City Center and Cheshire Bridge Road are separated from the rest of the school district by the railroad, are underserved by green space, and are not very walkable. Connections to the northwest side of the school district, the addition of green space, and streetscape improvements are possibilities for change in those areas. The following pages show photos and location key maps of the area adjacent to Garden Hills Elementary School.



A. Peach Shopping Center / Publix



C. Sheridan Drive at Peachtree Road



B. Peachtree Road at Sheridan Drive



D. Multi-Family Housing / Sheridan Drive



B. Peachtree Road at Sheridan Drive



E. New Multi-Family Housing / Sheridan

GARDEN HILLS PHOTOS



F. Multi-Family Housing | Sheridan



I. Gates | Atlanta International Academy



K. Garden Hills Elementary | Gardens



G. Confusing Signage | Delmont + Sheridan



J. Delmont Drive NE | AI Academy



K. Garden Hills Elementary | Drainage



G. Gated Facilities + Sign | GH Elementary



K. Garden Hills Elementary



L. Pedestrian Path to GH Elementary



G. Delmont Drive at Sheridan Drive



K. Garden Hills Elementary | Sports Fields



L. Pedestrian Path to GH Elementary



H. Delmont Drive



K. Garden Hills Elementary | Parking



M. Traffic Circle at Brentwood + Pine Tree

Existing Site Conditions

GARDEN HILLS PHOTOS



N. Garden Hills Pool / Park



S. Sidewalk on Lookout



W. Fulton Drive and Peachtree Avenue



O. Sunnybrook Park



T. Mix of new and older housing



X. Commercial Infill I Fulton Drive



P. Sign for Community House near Park



U. Fulton Drive + Delmont Drive



Y. Fulton Drive at Pharr Road NE



Q. Newer Housing Stock Infill



V. Atlanta International Academy



Z. Pharr Road NE at Peachtree Road



R. Housing on Brentwood



V. Bike Lane to AI Academy



Z. Pharr Road NE at Peachtree Road

SITE VISITS - BENTEN

Schools and Community Resources (see diagrams, page 83 and page 84)

Benteen Elementary School is a one-story building located adjacent to Benteen Park and near Boulevard Crossing Park, Chosewood Park, Grant Park, and Wesley International School. The nearest high schools are Maynard Jackson High School and Carver High School / Early College. Little commercial development is near the residential area and the school, and no grocery store is in close proximity, except a small one in the Grant Park area. Strip commercial development with expansive parking lots and value/discount stores is located at Moreland and Custer Avenues. Much of the land is forested around the Benteen neighborhood, and a large expanse of utility land sweeps through and disconnects pieces of the neighborhood. The neighborhood appears very disinvested; however, some newer developments are visible, which could indicate recent increased investment in the area.

Housing (see diagram page 85)

The Benteen neighborhood is comprised primarily of single-family housing. Much of the housing stock is older, with recent infill throughout the area and east of the school in the East Park Village subdivision on Custer Avenue. The residential area appears feels empty, and some of the lots are not well-maintained. Multi-family housing is located along Boulevard, and next to the Commercial Lofts on Boulevard near the railroad tracks.

Transportation + Circulation (see diagram page 86)

The closest MARTA train station is Ft. McPherson, but the school is nearly five miles from the station. The Boulevard corridor is fairly vacant with lots of overgrown and unmaintained land and vacant buildings. The Boulevard right-of-way is wide and sidewalks are in poor condition, making it an unpleasant walking environment. Moreland Avenue at Custer Avenue is open and expansive with sidewalks in disrepair and overgrown with weeds. Moreland is a five-lane street, but at noon on a Friday site visit, the traffic was not too congested. Some on-street parking is in the residential area and little traffic traveled the residential streets. Few people were walking around the neighborhood, but the poorly-maintained sidewalks, usually on one side of the street, caused some people to walk on the streets instead of the sidewalks

Hispanic Presence

While exploring the area, the Hispanic presence is not as noticeable as in the Garden Hills neighborhood.

BENTEEN DESCRIPTION

Benteen Safe Routes to School Plan:

Many students walk to school or take public transit, but the school solicited help from PEDS because of the unsafe conditions that students experienced when walking to school. Some students who live west of Boulevard are bussed to school because of unsafe walking conditions. The plan changed some signalized intersections and proposed additional sidewalks on the residential streets near the school. Surveys in the early 2000's stated that nearly half the students arrived to school by car (PEDS and Benteen Elementary, 2008).

Opportunities

Opportunities for infill development are strong along Boulevard, especially near the well-used Boulevard Crossing Park, because of the proximity to the school and amount of vacant land. Other infill opportunities are at the shopping center at Moreland and Custer, north of Custer Avenue near the utility land, and assuming future construction, along the Beltline. The utility land that currently severs the neighborhood could become a path of connection between important neighborhood nodes, like Boulevard Crossing Park and future development, the school, and Moreland Avenue. The school is centrally-located, providing opportunity for a community-centered school and expansion for activities into Benteen Park.



A. Benteen Elementary School



A. Benteen Elementary School



A. Benteen Park

BENTEN PHOTOS



B. Vacant Lot in front of Benteen ES



G. Entrance to Infill Single-Family Housing



L. Sign for Church at Custer + Boulevard



C. Sidewalk Conditions Near Benteen ES



H. Infill Single-Family Housing



L. Church of Atlanta Lighthouse Parking



D. Single-Family Housing



I. No Sidewalks - Single-Family Housing



M. Gladstone Apartments on Boulevard



E. Single-Family Housing



J. No Sidewalks - Single-Family Housing



N. Citgo Station at Boulevard + Custer



F. Utility Land on Custer Avenue



K. Retaining Wall on Custer Avenue



O. View to Penitentiary on Boulevard

Existing Site Conditions

BENTEN PHOTOS



P. Cassanova + Benteen Avenue



R. Shopping at Moreland + Custer



R. Shopping at Moreland + Custer



Q. Cassanova east of Benteen Avenue



R. Shopping at Moreland + Custer



S. Sidewalks on Custer at Moreland



T. Commercial on Moreland



U. Commercial at Custer + Moreland



U. Commercial at Custer + Moreland

COMPARISONS + NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

The following data were obtained from the Atlanta Regional Commission's Neighborhood Nexus WEAVE tool. The data are based on Census tract containing the school for both Benteen and Garden Hills neighborhoods, not the entire school district because the boundaries differ. Garden Hills is more densely populated, but based on these tracts, the Benteen Census tract has a higher Latino population and percentage of low-income residents. The tract with Garden Hills Elementary School also has a high white population, showing that the high Latino population at the school comes from other areas in the district.

Population Data | Race and Ethnicity | Poverty

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Population	White Population	Black Population	Hispanic Population	% Foreign Born	% Below Poverty Level
Garden Hills	13121009600	11,287	8,236	932	1,095	18.98%	8.01%
			72.53%	8.26%	9.70%		
Benteen	13121006900	3,166	1,050	1,422	593	17.90%	14.42%
			33.16%	44.91%	18.73%		

The age cohort percentages do not vary much between the two neighborhoods, except for the "Under 18" and "Age 18-29." The average age is also much different.

Population Data | Age

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Population	Under 18	Age 18-29	Age 30-44	Age 45-65	Age 65+
Garden Hills	13121009600	11,287	1,467	3,002	3,138	2,224	1,467
			13.00%	26.60%	27.80%	19.70%	13.00%
Benteen	13121006900	3,166	757	586	997	674	152
			23.90%	18.50%	31.50%	21.30%	4.80%

Neighborhood	Mean Age (2010)	Mean Age (2000)	Median Age (2000)
Garden Hills	38.55	41.01	34.3
Benteen	32.64	30.31	29.2

The educational attainment levels in the neighborhoods are very different. The number of people 25+ without a high school diploma is much higher in Benteen than in Garden Hills, and in Garden Hills, the number of people with a Bachelor or Graduate Degree far surpasses that of Benteen.

Educational Attainment

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	% of people 25+ Without HS Diploma	% of People with Bachelor's Degree	% of People With Graduate or Prof. Degree
Garden Hills	13121009600	5.66%	68.11%	24.83%
Benteen	13121006900	27.06%	29.68%	6.06%

Existing Site Conditions

COMPARISONS + NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

A higher percentage of households in Benteen are considered “linguistically isolated” or single-parent households than in Garden Hills.

Household Data

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Households	Households with Kids	Single Parent Households	Single Mom Households	Married Households	Married Households with Kids	Household Size	Median Household Income	Linguistically Isolated
Garden Hills	13121009600	6595	857	213	141	1661.94	639.8469	1.58	73,444	325
			13.00%	3.20%	2.20%	25.20%	38.50%			5.75%
Benteen	13121006900	1270	376	189	151	349	181	3.88	46,384	168
					11.90%	27.48%	14.25%			12.32%

Occupied and vacant unit percentages for both neighborhoods are fairly comparable. A lower percentage of units in the Benteen Census tract are rented than in the Garden Hills Census tract, which is surprising when looking at the figure ground diagram and observing the building development patterns (pages 71 and 80). However, the median home value in the Benteen tract is nearly half the value in the Garden Hills tract.

Housing Units

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Housing Units	Occupied Units	Vacant Units	Owner-occupied Units	Renter-occupied Units	Median Home Value
Garden Hills	13121009600	7841	6,595	1,246	2,869	3,726	413,545
			84.11%	15.89%	43.50%	56.50%	
Benteen	13121006900	1530	1,270	260	725	545	213,900
			83.01%	16.50%	57.09%	42.91%	

Many more children, households, and people in general, in the Benteen tract are receiving food stamps. However, from the free / reduced lunch data from the Georgia Department of Education, it seems that the students in Garden Hills receiving assistance live in different Census tracts than the one with the school.

Food Stamps

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Food Stamps Recipients	Children Age 5-17 Receiving Food Stamps	Households Receiving Food Stamps	% of Households	% of Population
Garden Hills	13121009600	310	94	191	2.90%	2.75%
Benteen	13121006900	800	263	412	32.44%	25.27%

The percentage of people in the labor force and that are employed is fairly comparable between the two tracts, but the unemployment rate in the Benteen tract is significantly higher (see chart on adjacent page).

COMPARISONS + NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

Employment + Labor Force

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Total Population 16+	Population 16+ in Labor Force	Percent 16+ Employed	Unemployment Rate
<i>Garden Hills</i>	13121009600	8,607	6,338	70.64%	4.07%
			73.64%		
<i>Benteen</i>	13121006900	2,993	2,379	67.99%	14.46%
			79.49%		

Despite relative proximity to three MARTA rail stations (Buckhead, Lenox, Lindbergh), a lower percentage of Garden Hills residents in this Census tract use public transportation. In contrast, Benteen is nearly five miles from the nearest station (Ft. McPherson/Lakewood), and is primarily served by bus service, and a higher percentage use public transportation. More workers also drove and carpooled to work.

Work Transportation Options

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	Workers Drive Alone	Workers Drive and Carpool	Workers that Take Public Transportation
<i>Garden Hills</i>	13121009600	4,792	146	411
		79.34%	2.42%	6.80%
<i>Benteen</i>	13121006900	1,142	297	323
		57.53%	14.96%	16.27%

Existing Site Conditions



SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES GARDEN HILLS - 1,861.113 acres



Garden Hills Elementary School Location



School District Boundary



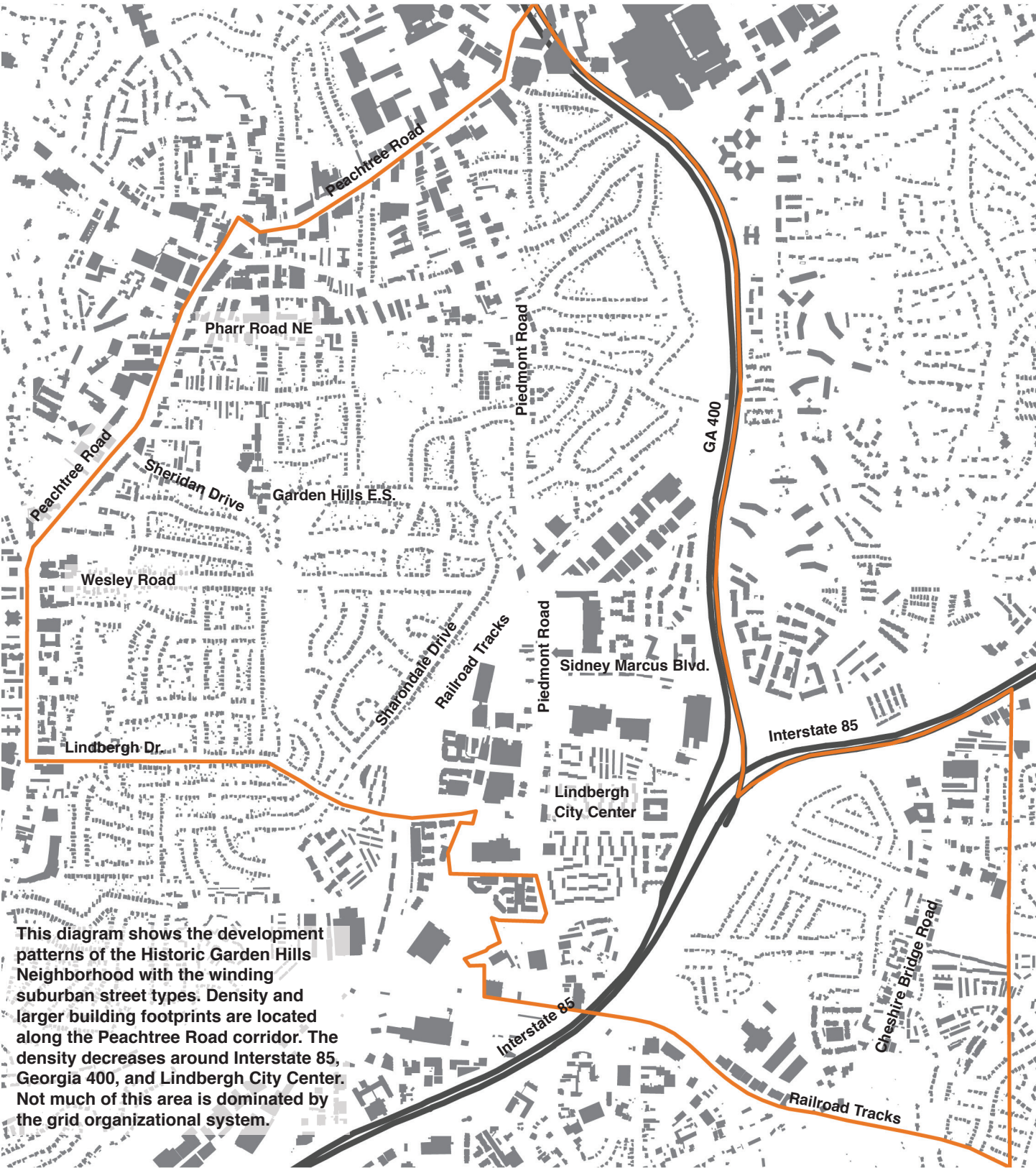


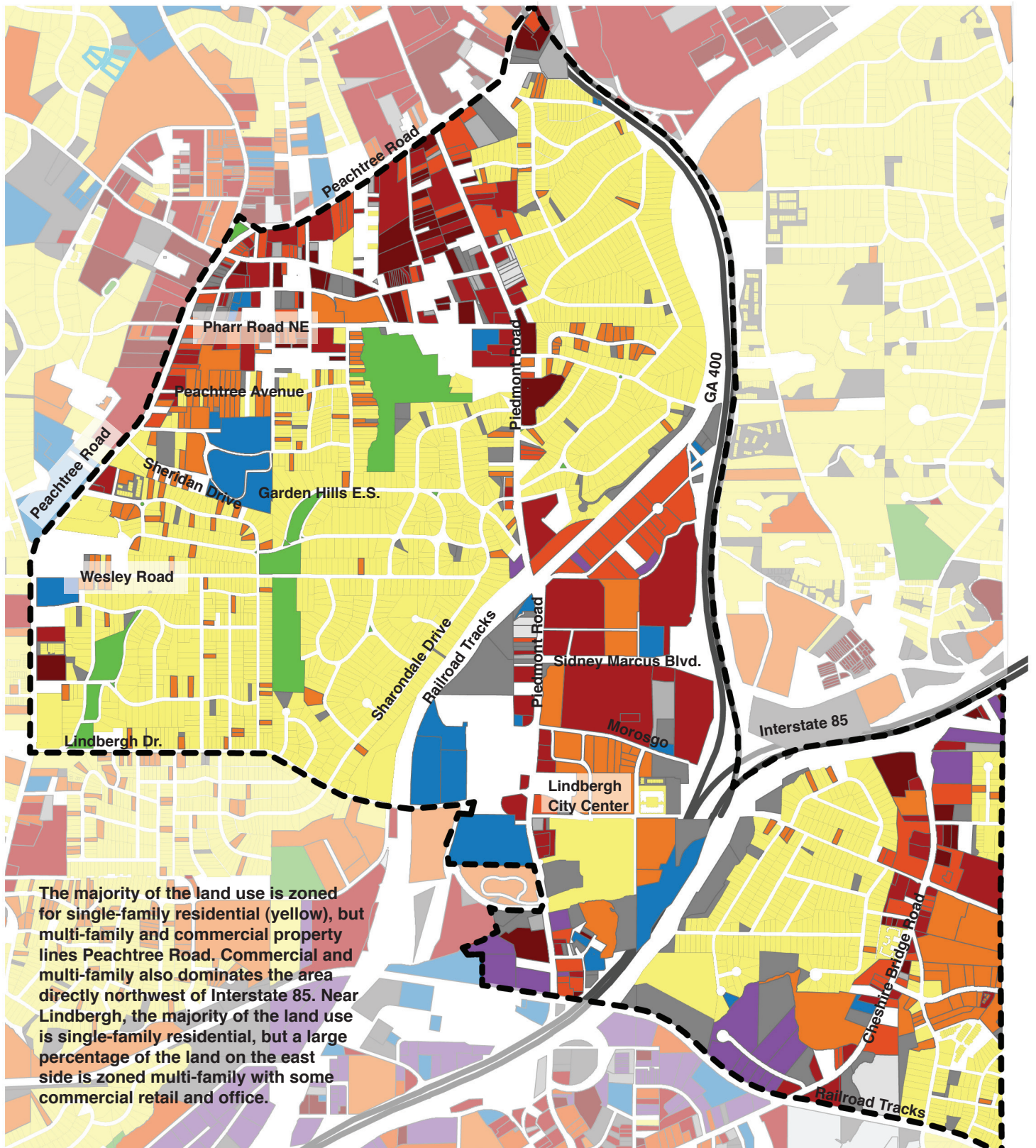
FIGURE GROUND GARDEN HILLS

Building Footprint School District Boundary

0 1000 2000 3000 4000



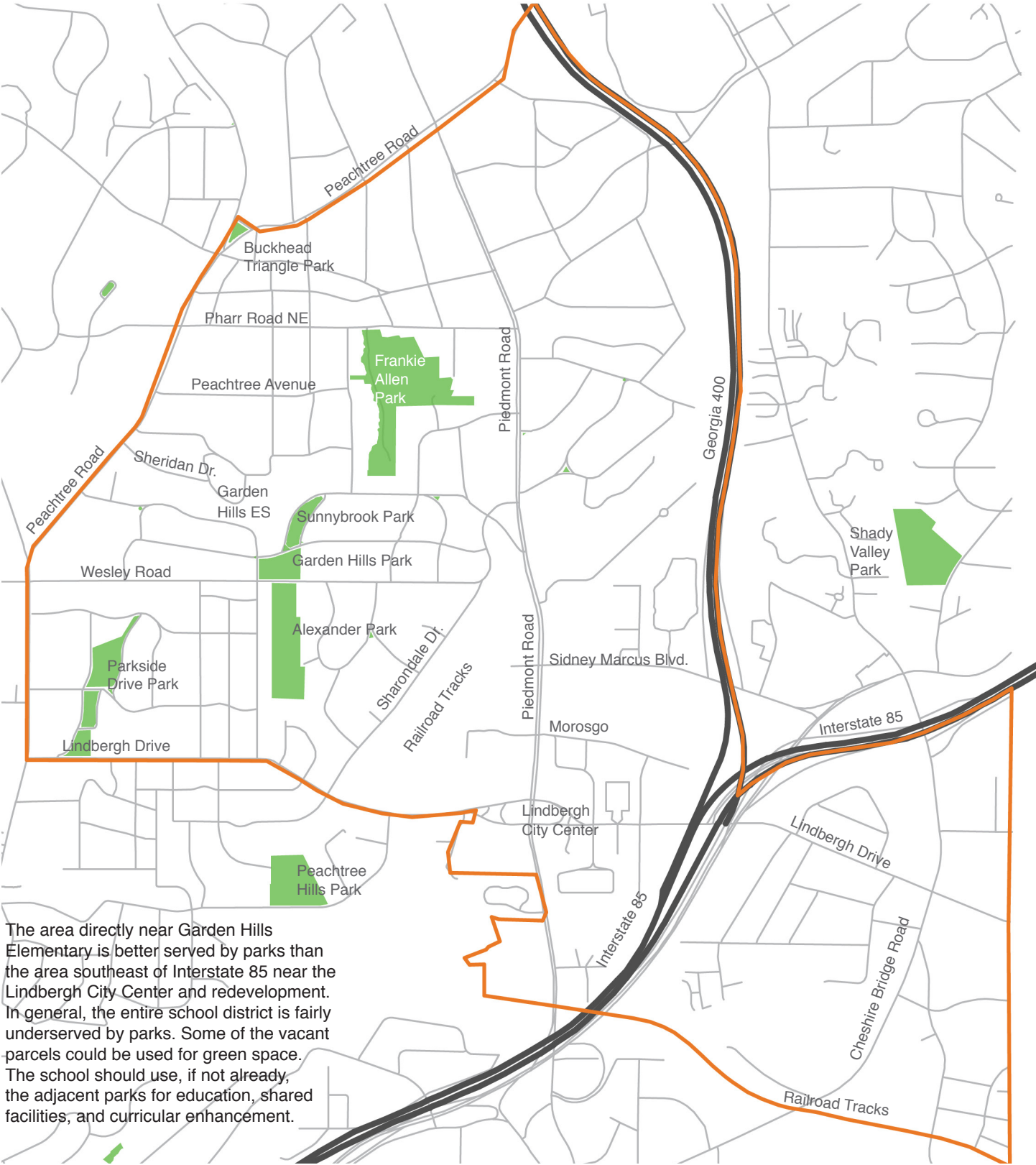
Existing Site Conditions



LAND USE DIAGRAM

GARDEN HILLS

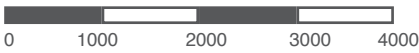




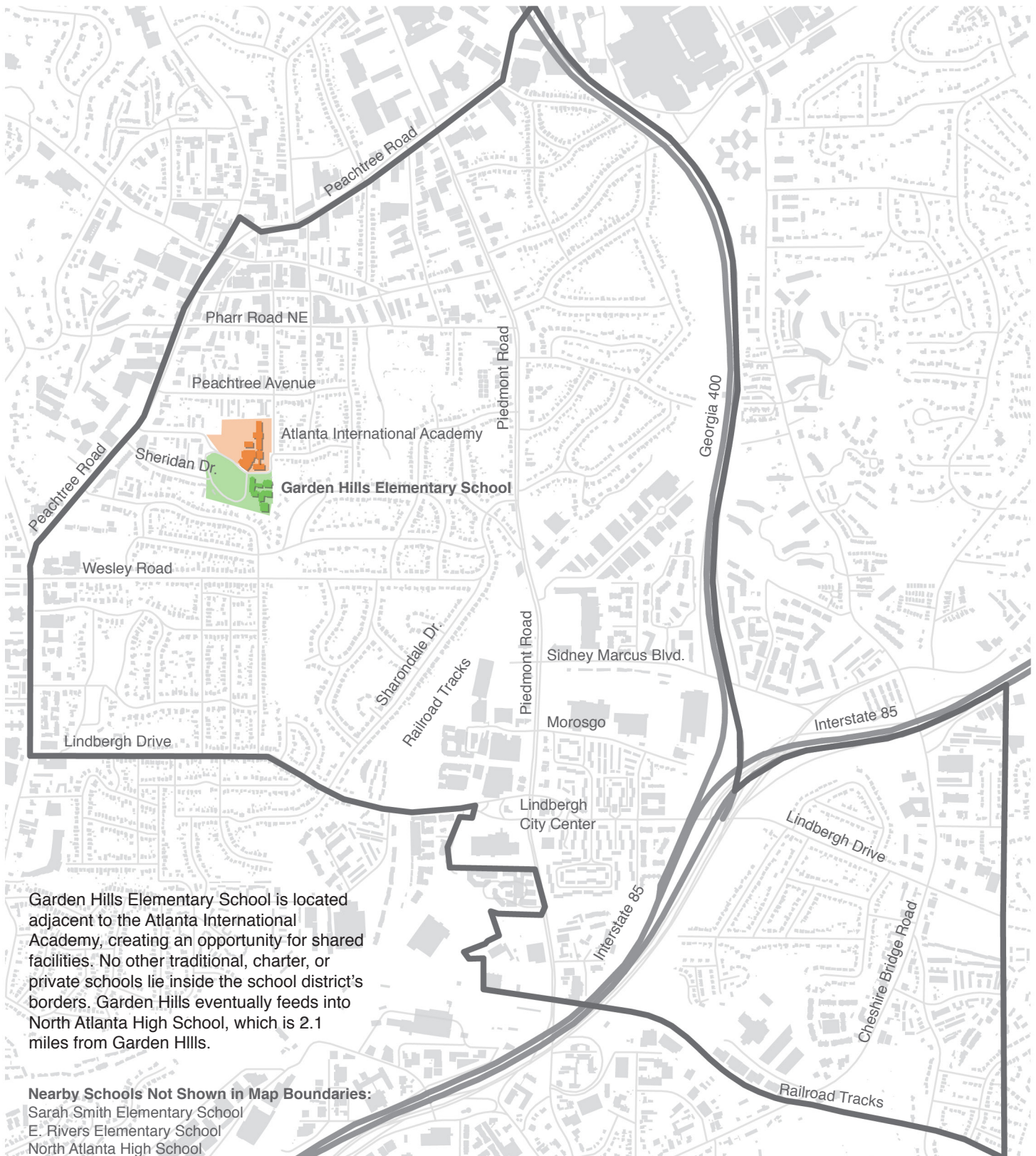
The area directly near Garden Hills Elementary is better served by parks than the area southeast of Interstate 85 near the Lindbergh City Center and redevelopment. In general, the entire school district is fairly underserved by parks. Some of the vacant parcels could be used for green space. The school should use, if not already, the adjacent parks for education, shared facilities, and curricular enhancement.

SURROUNDING PARKS GARDEN HILLS

Park Space School District Boundary



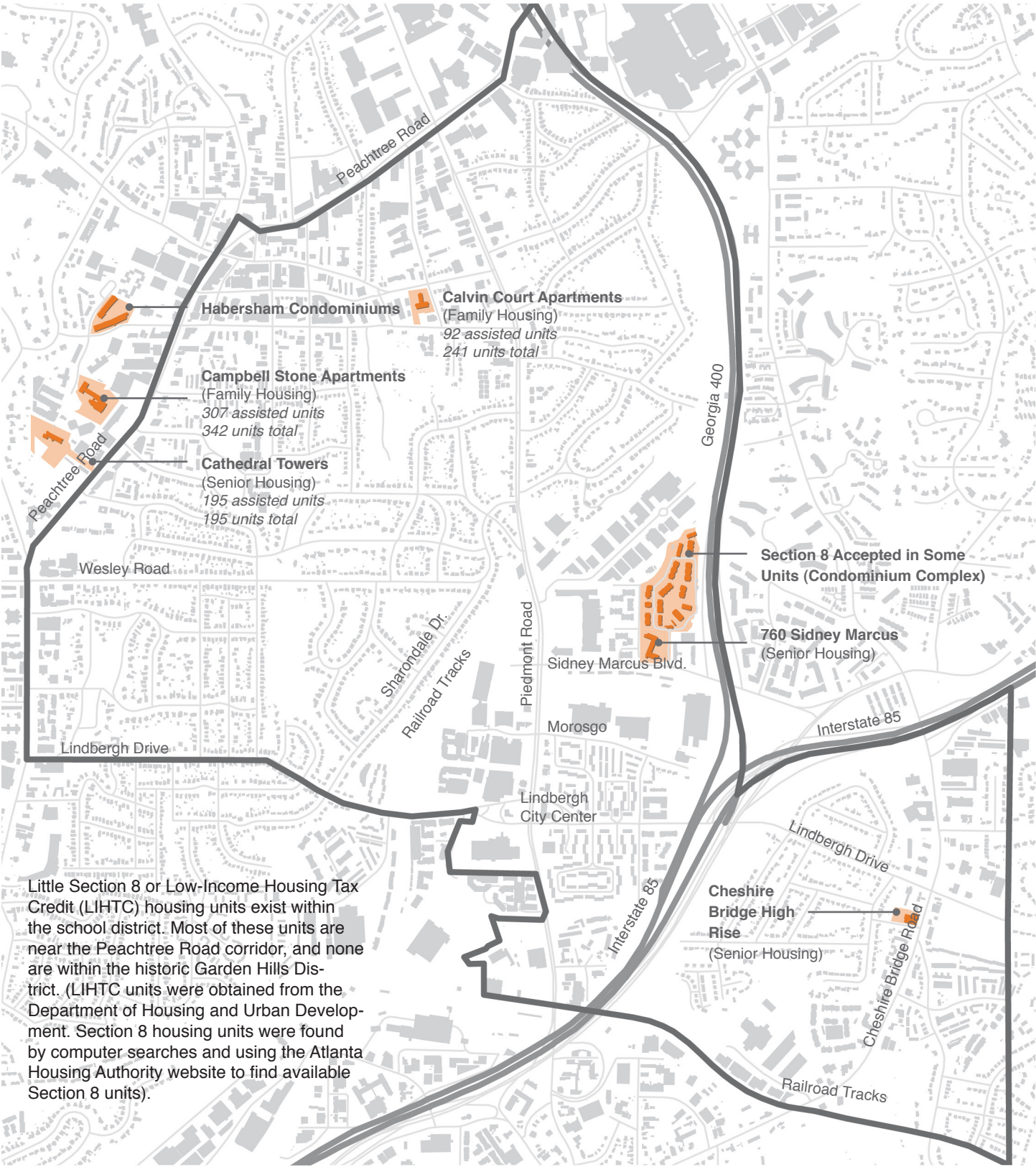
Existing Site Conditions



SURROUNDING SCHOOLS GARDEN HILLS

0 1000 2000 3000 4000



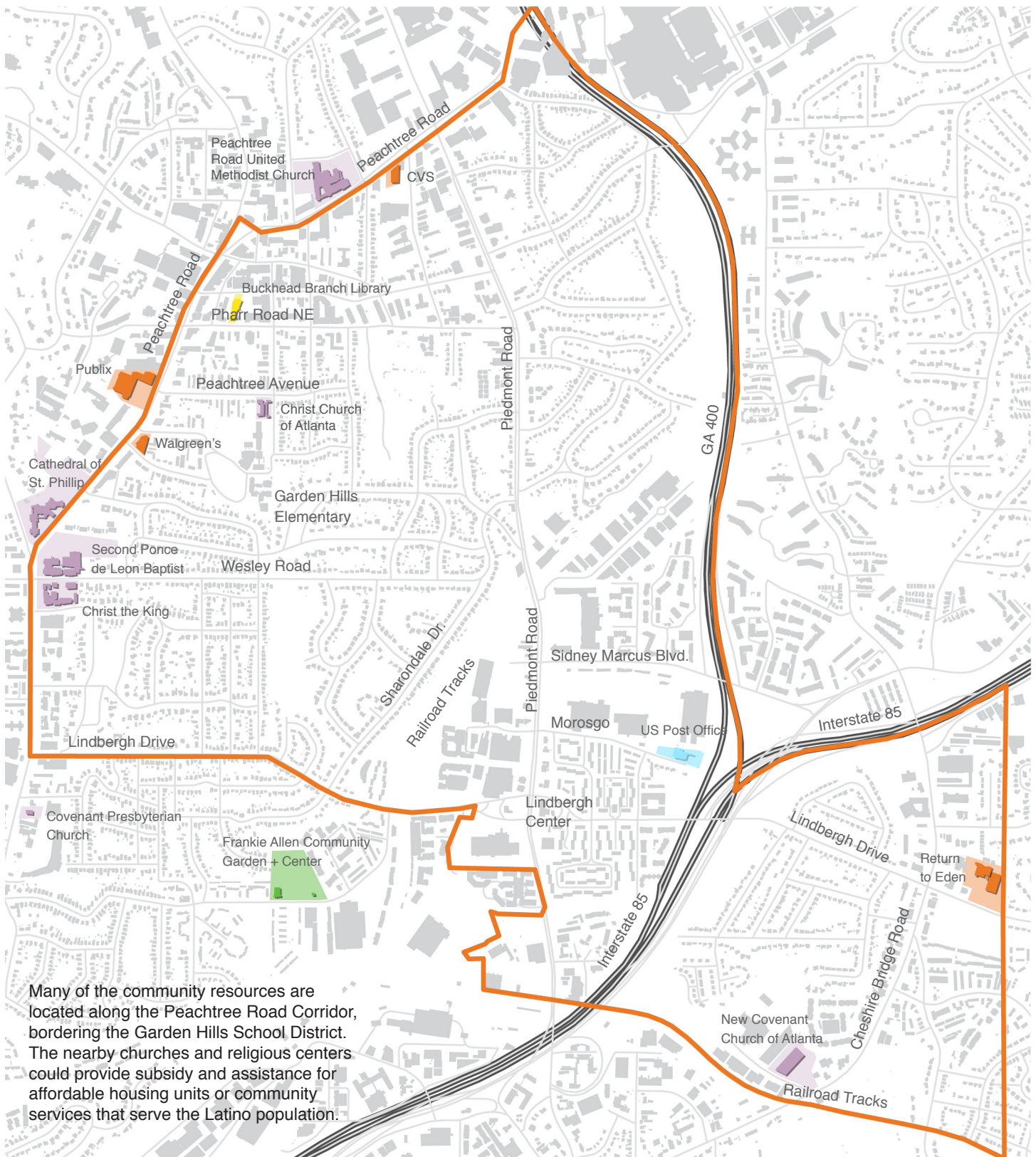


LOW INCOME HOUSING GARDEN HILLS

Multi-Family Complex (Section 8 or LIHTC)

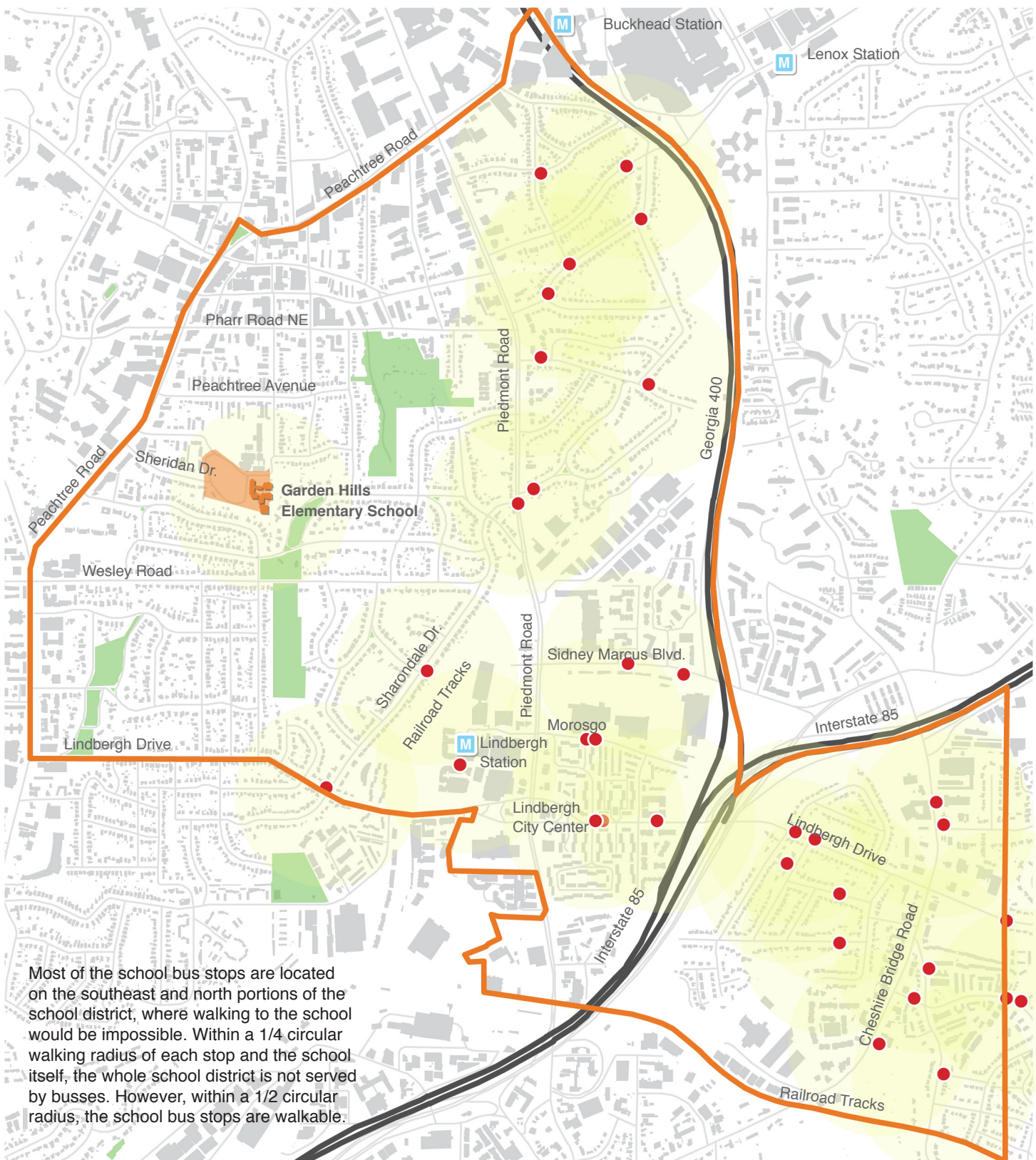


Existing Site Conditions



COMMUNITY RESOURCES GARDEN HILLS





SCHOOL BUS STOPS GARDEN HILLS



Existing Site Conditions

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT [SIDEWALKS]

GARDEN HILLS



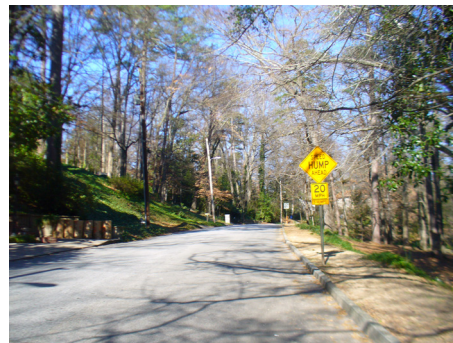
Brentwood Street, east of Garden Hills Elementary School has sidewalks (approximately 4') on both sides of the street along some portions.



Sheridan Drive east of Garden Hills Elementary has some sidewalks (approximately 4' wide).



Peachtree Street has approximately 8' sidewalks, but no buffer between the high-speed traffic and pedestrians.



Brentwood Street adjacent to Sunnybrook Park has no sidewalks.



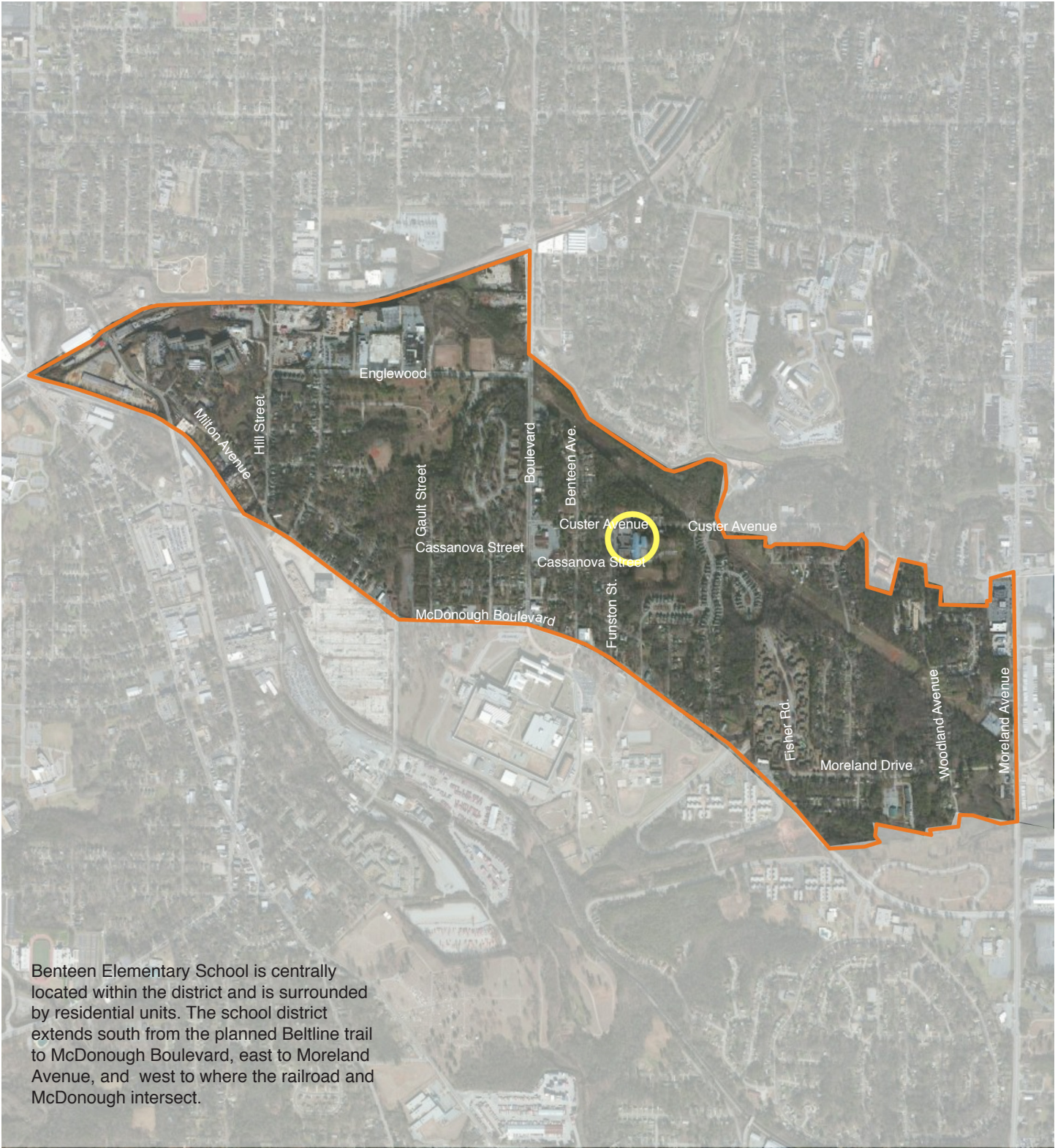
Lookout Street near the elementary school has sidewalks. Many sidewalks are broken, narrow, or have obstacles with street trees and utility poles.



Sidewalks near Garden Hills Park are narrow and sporadic.





Delmont Street at Sheridan Street across from the elementary school and near the soccer fields has no sidewalks.





Benteen Elementary School is centrally located within the district and is surrounded by residential units. The school district extends south from the planned Beltline trail to McDonough Boulevard, east to Moreland Avenue, and west to where the railroad and McDonough intersect.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES BENTEEN - 729.16 acres

 Garden Hills Elementary School Location

 School District Boundary





Existing Site Conditions

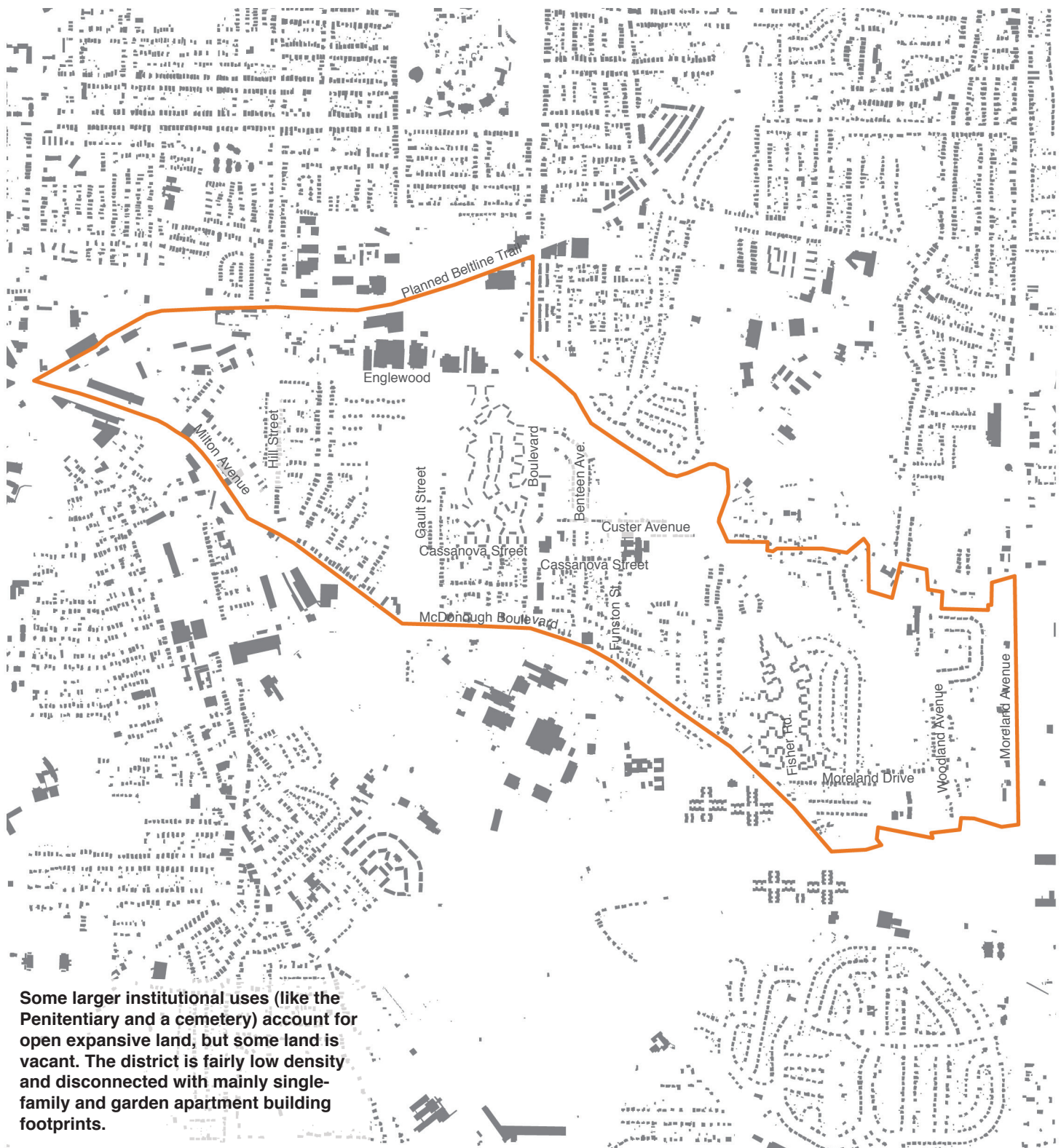
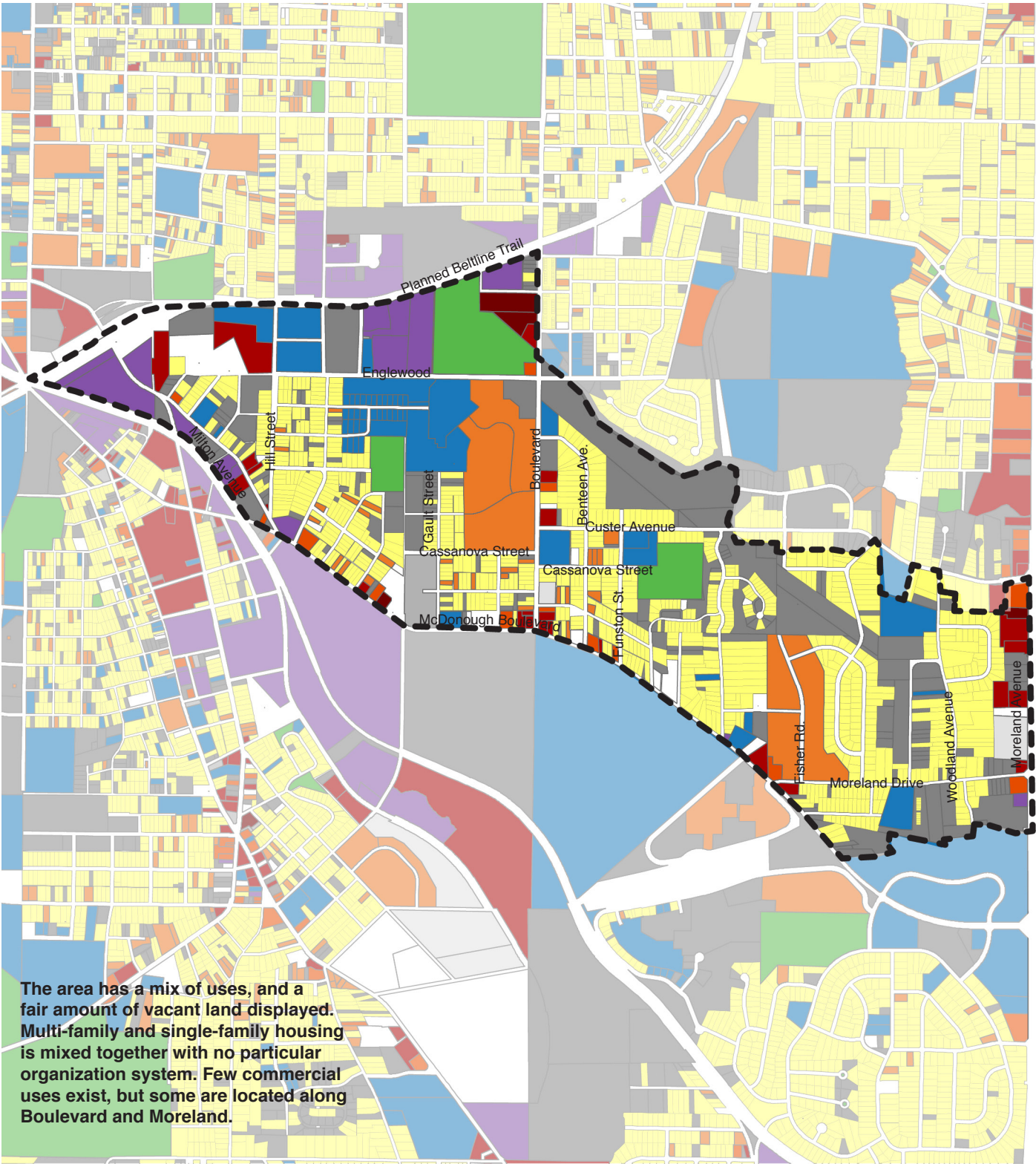


FIGURE GROUND BENTEEN

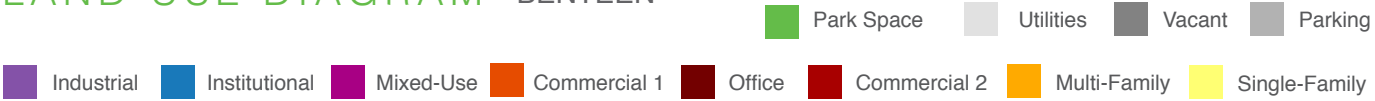
Building Footprint School District Boundary

0 500 1000 1500 2000

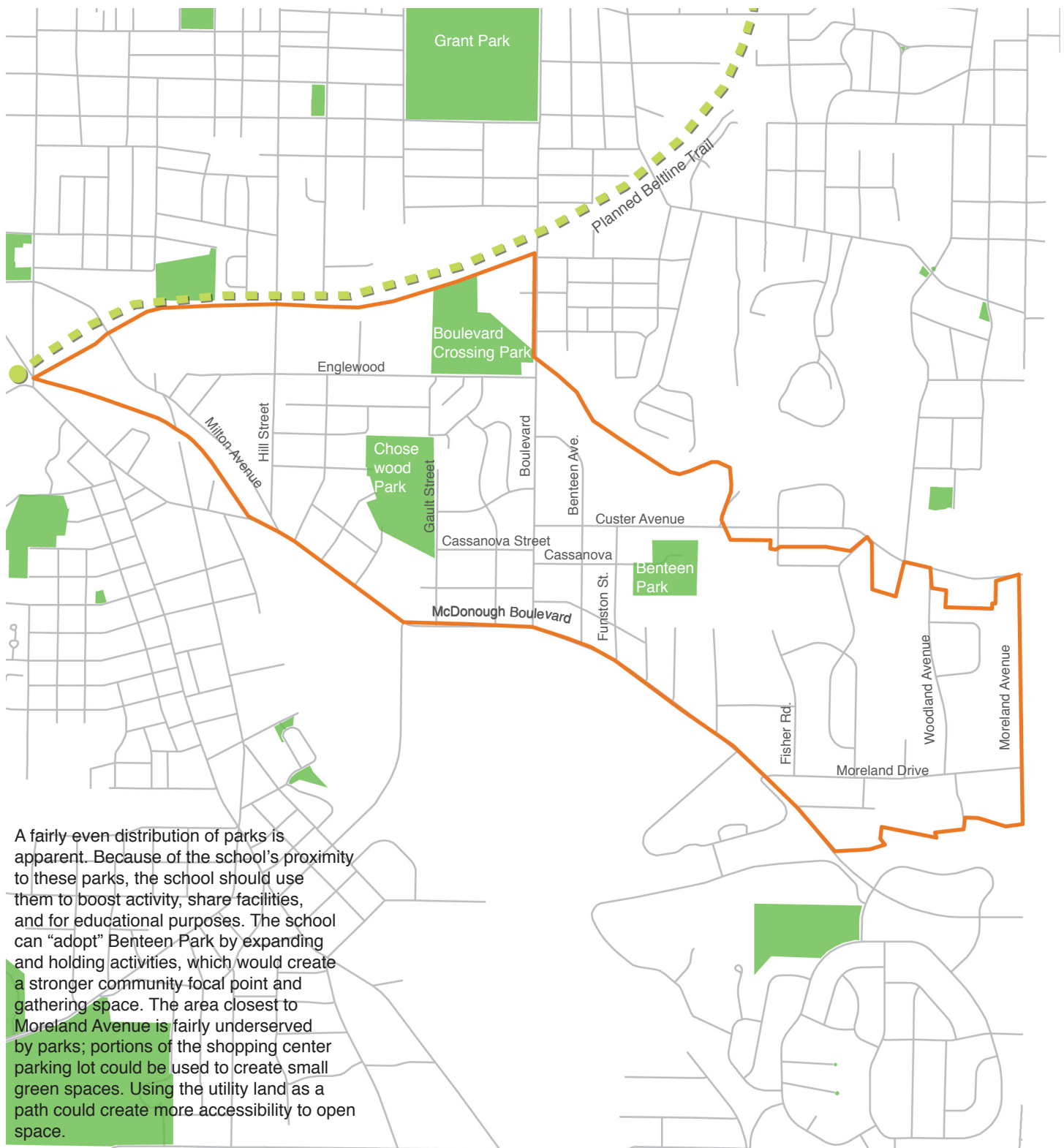




LAND USE DIAGRAM BENTEEN



Existing Site Conditions



SURROUNDING PARKS BENTEN

■ Park Space — School District Boundary

0 500 1000 1500 2000





COMMUNITY RESOURCES BENTEEN

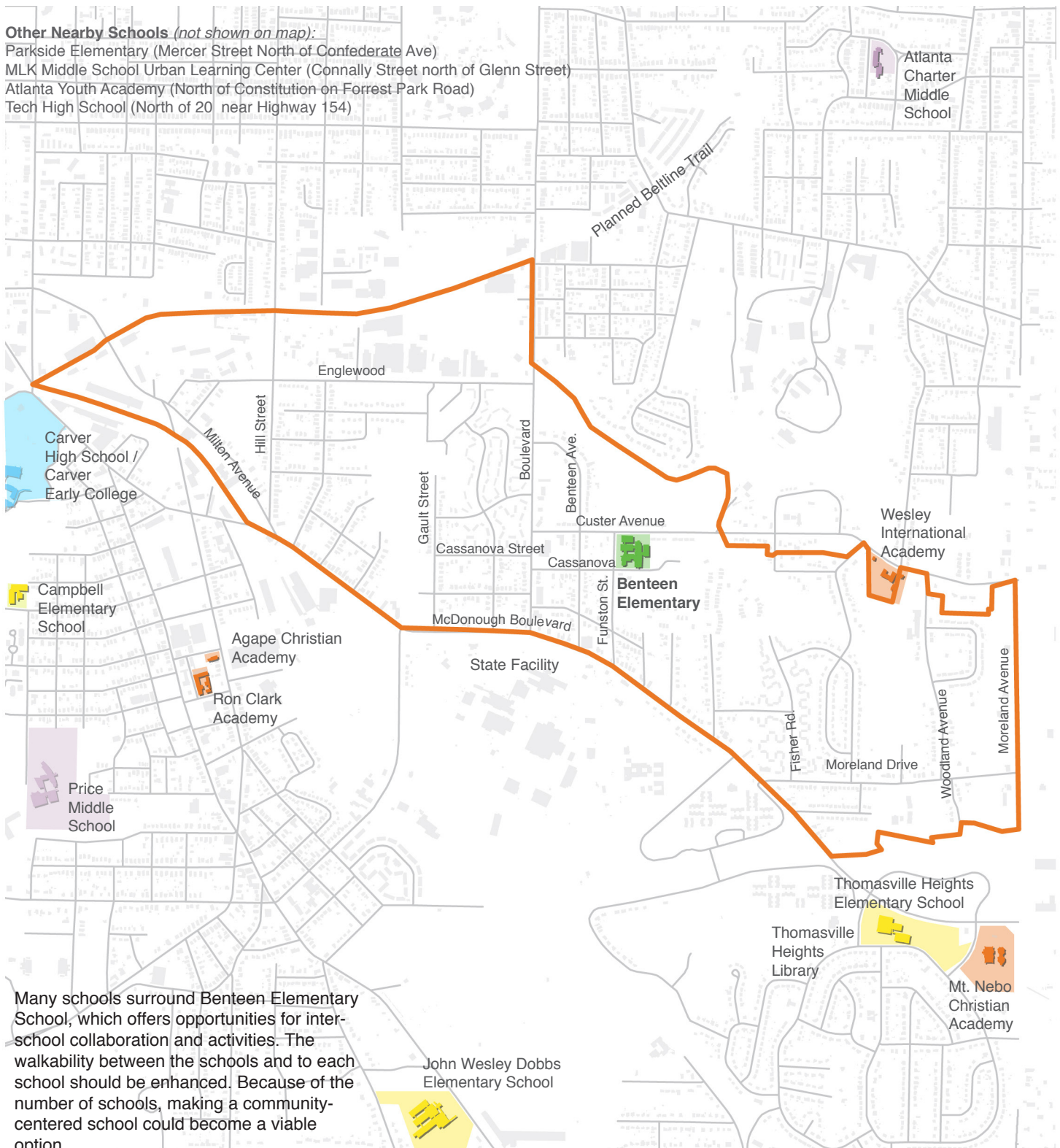
0 500 1000 1500 2000



Existing Site Conditions

Other Nearby Schools (not shown on map):

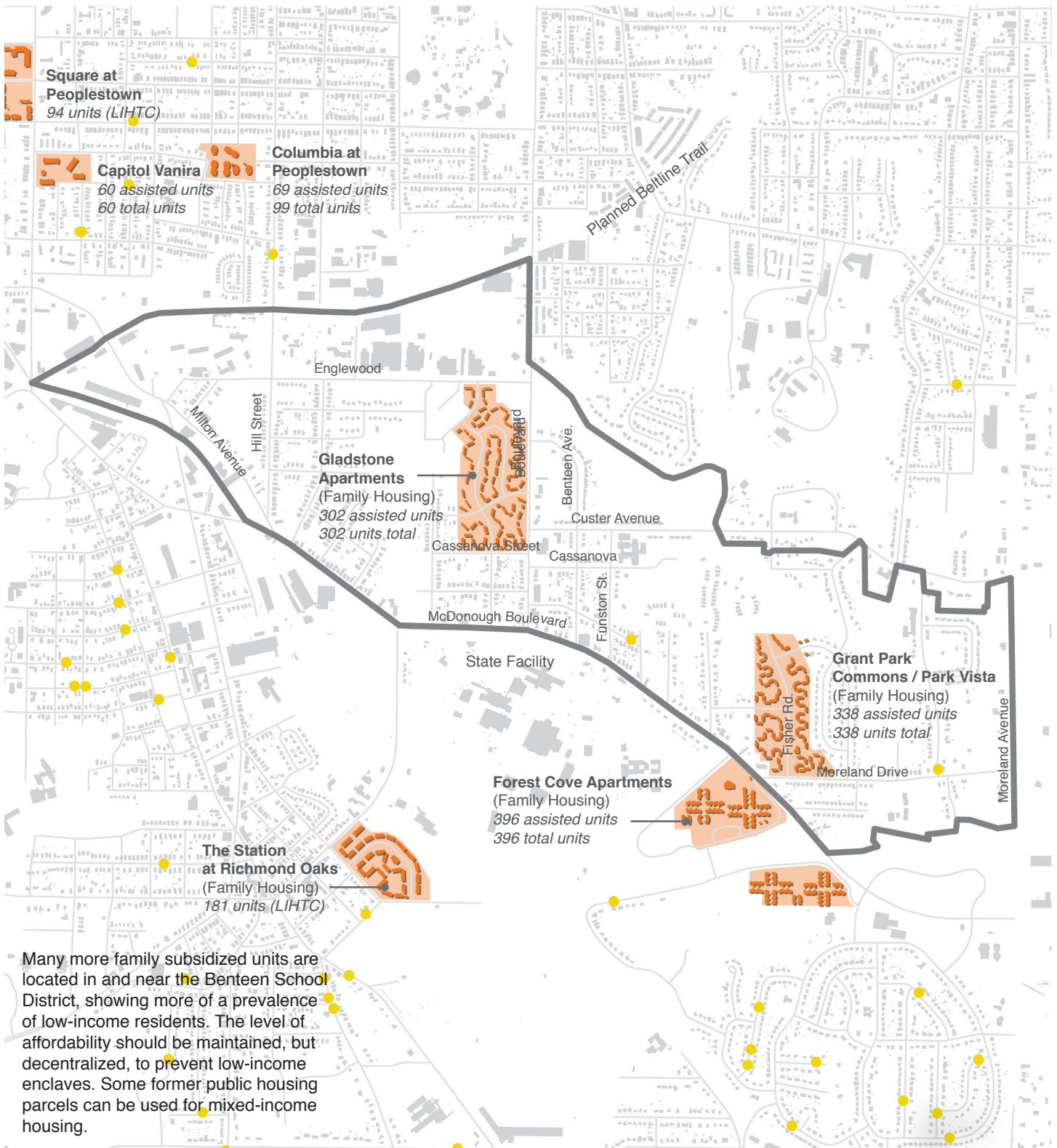
Parkside Elementary (Mercer Street North of Confederate Ave)
 MLK Middle School Urban Learning Center (Connally Street north of Glenn Street)
 Atlanta Youth Academy (North of Constitution on Forrest Park Road)
 Tech High School (North of 20 near Highway 154)



SURROUNDING SCHOOLS BENTEEN

0 1000 2000 3000 4000



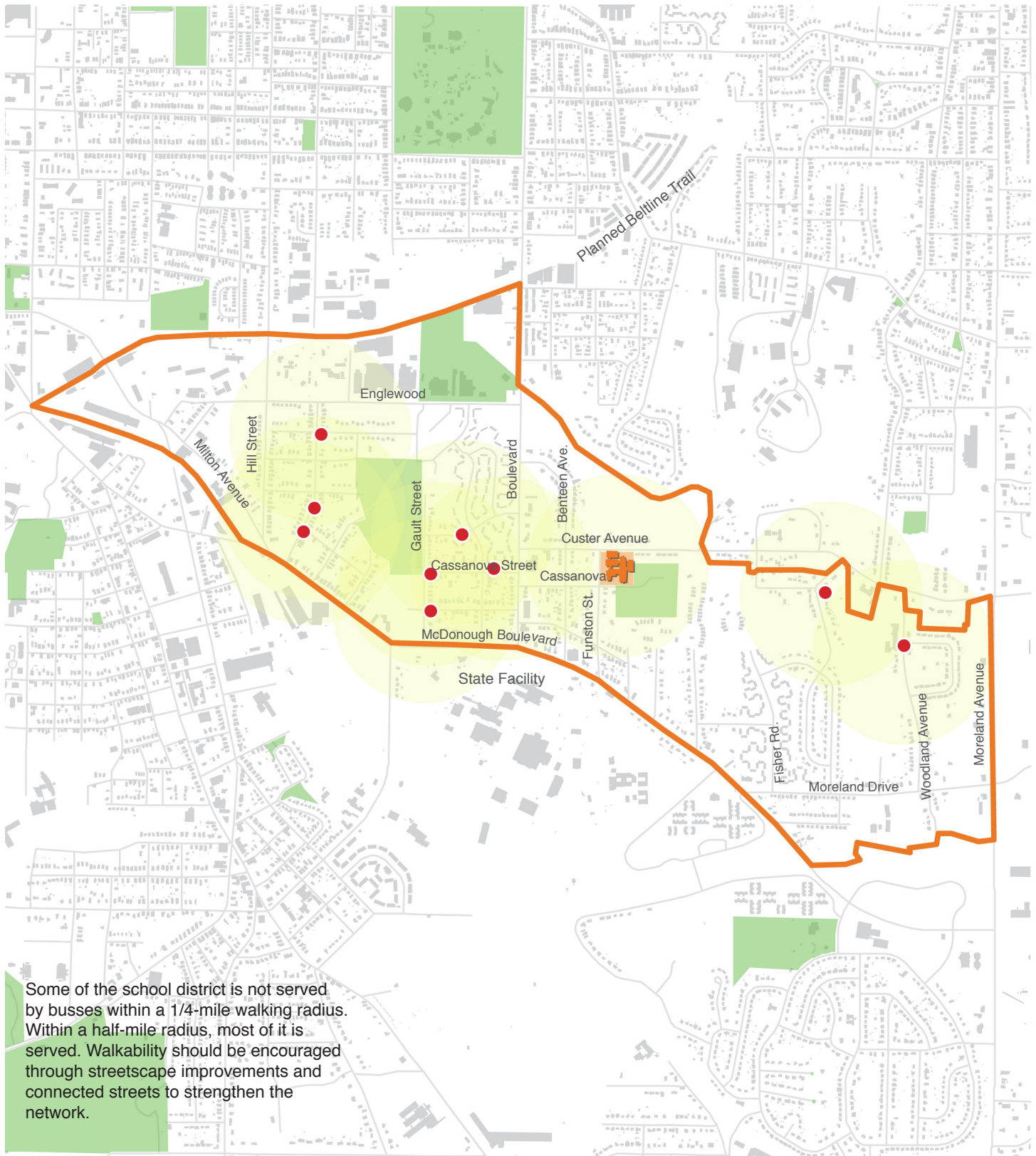


LOW INCOME HOUSING BENTEN

● Single Family or Duplex Unit (Section 8) ■ Multi-Family Complex (Section 8 or LIHTC)



Existing Site Conditions



SCHOOL BUS STOPS BENTEN



PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT [SIDEWALKS]

BENTEEN



This image shows wide but uneven sidewalks down Funston Street, south of Custer Avenue. No street trees or pedestrian realm exists, and the hill is also substantially steep.



Sidewalks are cracked in many places, often with weeds, or do not exist on one or both sides of the street.



Narrow sidewalks line many of the residential streets near the school. The other side of the streets do not have sidewalks



The sidewalk in front of the elementary school on Custer Avenue has a small patch of grass between two concrete slabs. However, some street trees provide enclosure, and the existence of grass lawns provides a better pedestrian environment. Striping on the street also warns drivers of the school zone and pedestrian crossings.



Crosswalks at Cassanova Street and Custer Avenue in front of the school allow for safer pedestrian crossings.



Custer Avenue carries fast traffic and the sidewalks are narrow. The north side of the street does not have sidewalks, and some of the land is vacant or used for utilities.

Goals + Criteria

School	Provide Access to School			Community Anchor		Active Curriculum + Strong Test Scores				Community Design / Options			Proximity to Amenities			
	Walkability (can students safely walk to school)	Transit (is MARTA an option for students)	Bussing (how much bussing is necessary for the school)	Sharing Facilities with the Community	Community Involvement in the School	ESOL Teacher	Age ESOL Education Starts	Active Curriculum	Improved Test Scores	Mix of Housing Options	Latino Culture Representation	Physical Density	Proximity to Green Space	Proximity to Recreation Center	Proximity to Community/R	Proximity to Grocery Store and Daily Needs
Garden Hills Elementary School	Middle Marks: Lenox, Buckhead, and Lindbergh stations are near the district, but no walkable access. Possible bus lines	Middle Marks: Most occurs from Lindbergh / Cheshire Bridge area and Northeast corner of district		???	High Marks: Path constructed to the school and sponsored by neighborhood association; community sponsors	High Marks: Multiple ESOL teachers	???	Middle Marks: Evidence from the Community Garden Plots on School Grounds; IB program; Challenge Program	Middle Marks: Some improvements overall in test scores since 2008-2009 school year	Middle Marks: Multi-Family, Single-Family, Few Affordable Housing Units	Low Marks: Very little to distinguish cultural differences	High Marks: Mostly built out, some improvement is needed	High Marks: Walkable to Garden Hills Park and others	Low Marks: Not Walkable to Peachtree Hills Recreation Center	Low Marks: Atlanta Next door, but others far away (HS, MS)	High Marks: Walkable to Publix and Commercial Development on Peachtree and Pharr Road
Benteen Elementary School	Middle Marks: Some sidewalks and pedestrian changes	Middle Marks: Benteen Safe Routes Plan indicates that students ride MARTA buses to school	Low Marks: Few school bus lines, and some areas not served by school buses	???	???	High Marks: 2 ESOL teachers (smaller student body)	???	???	Middle Marks: Some improvements overall in test scores since 2008-2009 school year	High Marks: Single-Family, Section 8 housing units - quality not as good	Low Marks: Very little to distinguish cultural differences	Low Marks: Many vacant lots, buildings, vacant utility land	High Marks: Directly adjacent to Benteen Park, close to others	Low Marks: Not very walkable (distance) to Grant Park Recreation Center	Middle Marks: Many schools nearby, closer to HS and MS	Low Marks: Must drive to reach commercial development

Each school was measured based on a set of goals and criteria. The goals included: providing access to school, functioning as a community anchor, maintaining an active curriculum and strong test scores, the effectiveness of the community design, and proximity to amenities. The criteria went into further detail for each goal, and each set of criteria was measured with low (orange), middle (yellow), and high (green) marks. The results are shown in the matrix on the adjacent page.

As a result of this evaluation, site visits, and site inventory and analysis, a set of physical and policy recommendations were made for the framework-, master-, and school-scale areas of study. The physical recommendations are illustrated in the framework, master, and site-scale plans on pages 94, 100-101, and 110 for Garden Hills and pages 96, 104-107, 111 for Benteen

The framework plans for Benteen (729 acres) and Garden Hills (1,863 acres) aim to integrate the growing Latino population and formulate recommendations to improve the educational quality for Latinos and all students attending schools. The framework plans include guidelines and locations for appropriate infill of parks, and residential, commercial, social service uses. The master plans serve as key community nodes and connection points for the neighborhood and school districts. These plans include designs of residential areas, commercial areas, park and plaza spaces, and sustainable development practices with stormwater management, affordable housing, urban agriculture, and compact development. This development integrates elements of Latino culture, aims to assist Latinos gain upward mobility, and serves the existing residents. Finally, school site plans have conceptual stormwater management designs, and other elements that can enhance the schools' curriculums. Policy recommendations are made at the school system and Benteen and Garden Hills school district levels.

GARDEN HILLS

Framework Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Sidewalk additions or repairs where necessary
- Crosswalks and signage added to Peachtree Street, Sheridan Road, and Pharr Road NE
- Open the access drives (Delmont Drive and Sheridan Drive) to Garden Hills Elementary and the Atlanta International School

Middle-Term

- Sidewalk additions around the nearby parks
- Alternative walking or biking paths to the school (sidewalks and bike lanes)
- Add to the existing path that leads to the school (signage, sidewalks)
- Add infill development and use nodal development strategies
- Add affordable housing units and commercial uses
- Add community-serving facilities and park improvements

Long-Term

- Add trees and medians to larger streets (Peachtree, Pharr, Wesley, Lindbergh, Piedmont, Cheshire Bridge)
- Increase street connectivity, particularly around the school and from Lindbergh Center to the school
- Implement larger affordable housing developments
- Add more green space around Lindbergh City Center

Master Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Encourage local business development at key locations, such as Peachtree Road, Pharr Road, and at Lindbergh City Center
- Promote sharing facilities between the two schools

Middle-Term

- Infill at the Peach Shopping Center
- Add housing along Peachtree Road and in smaller lots on residential streets (some affordable units)
- Form the gateway to Garden Hills and the Atlanta International School (see site plan, page 110)

Long-Term

- Finish infill at the Peach Shopping Center (see master plan page 100-101)
- Add affordable housing units

Site Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Expand the existing community garden project
- Add rain barrels to collect stormwater
- Put student art in the courtyards

Middle-Term

- Move some community garden activities next to the International School
- Build rain garden on south side of the school

Long-Term

- Construct the terraced rain garden leading to the sports field
- Construct the outdoor classroom

BENTEEN

Framework Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Add crosswalks and signage on streets as needed
- Start school activities connecting to Benteen Park

Middle-Term

- Create alternative walking or biking paths to school (sidewalks and bike lanes)
- Make main street corridors on Boulevard and Custer
- Add infill development and use nodal development strategies
- Add affordable housing units and commercial uses
- Add community-serving and school-serving facilities
- Add single- and multi-family housing along key corridors

Long-Term

- Make street improvements on Boulevard, Custer, Moreland (add trees or medians, reduce lanes)
- Reconnect street grid, particularly around the school, parks and other neighborhood amenities
- Add more commercial development, possibly at Moreland Avenue
- Add more housing units
- Complete multi-use path on utility land

Master Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Start acquisition of utility land for path
- Encourage local business development and Latino-serving uses to locate in the area
- Improve walking conditions by and to the school
- Build gateway at Englewood and Boulevard
- Open Gladstone Apartments on Boulevard to the street (remove fence and add landscaping, usable open space)

Middle-Term

- Create a center around Boulevard Crossing Park with park-supporting activities, residential, commercial uses
- Add community-serving activities and social services around Custer Avenue and the school
- Start construction of the path on utility land to connect different neighborhood nodes
- Add trail extension that connects to the school (shown on Master plan 2)

Long-Term

- Finish developments at Boulevard and Englewood and along Custer
- Reconnect streets and add housing units
- Connect to and focus development around the Beltline if constructed
- Complete streetscape changes for Boulevard and residential streets

Recommendations

BENTEN CONTINUED

Site Plan:

Immediate-Term

- Add rain barrels to collect stormwater
- Start a community garden project
- Add student art to Benteen Park

Middle-Term

- Construct rain gardens and bioswales
- Move playground equipment to accommodate stormwater features
- Improve the sidewalks on the school site

Long-Term

- Construct the outdoor classroom
- Make permanent structures for art in Benteen Park

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Atlanta Public Schools:

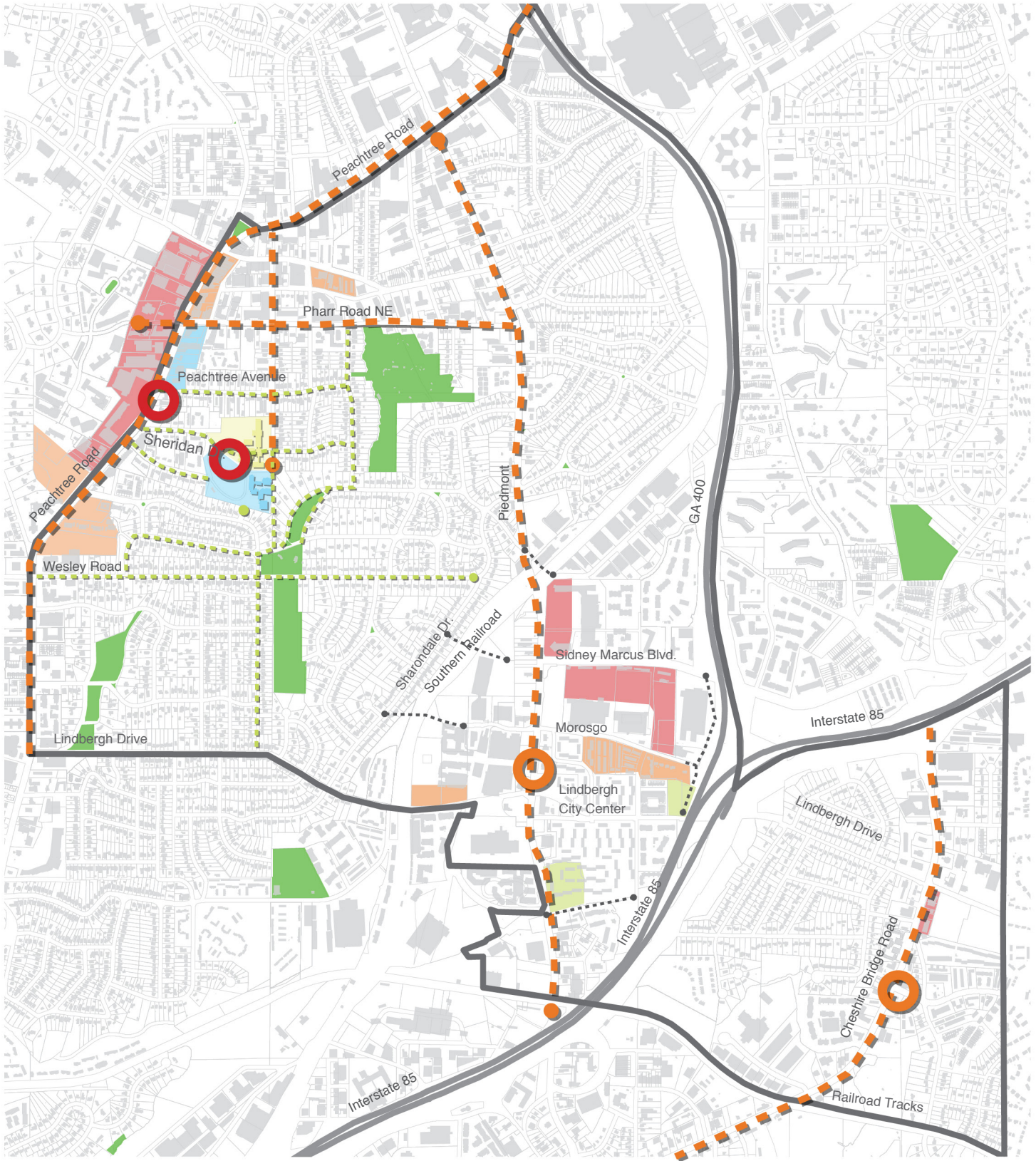
- Initiate programs that integrate and celebrate Latinos in the school and surrounding community
- Improve the walkability to school
- Implement additional before- and after-school activities
- Increase incentives to take public transportation to school in order to reduce the need for school busses
- Implement school to work programs or more vocational programs at the nearby high schools
- Increase the accountability between the communities and schools themselves
 - Hold community events centered around the school
 - Demonstrate how much the community needs the school and the school needs the community
 - Encourage further investment in the school from residents without students / children

Garden Hills:

- Increase the active curriculum (visiting parks, stormwater management features, art projects, field trips, volunteer programs, community gardens)
- Start ESOL programs young and sustain them as long as necessary for students
- Add cultural activities to the school's curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- Increase the accountability and investment between parents and the schools
 - Involve residents in stormwater management activities (expertise, constructing)
 - Engage parents in arts programs and community gardens
- Hire more Latino or Spanish-speaking teachers to potentially increase the Latino students' engagement and performance
- Encourage students to engage with the students at nearby schools

Benteen:

- Increase the English as a Second Language programs as needed
- Increase the active curriculum (visiting parks, stormwater management features, art projects, field trips, volunteer programs, community gardens)
- Start ESOL programs when students are young and sustain them as long as necessary for students
- Add cultural activities to the school's curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- Increase the accountability and investment between parents and the schools
 - Involve residents in stormwater management activities (expertise, constructing)
 - Engage parents in arts programs and community gardens
- Hire more Latino or Spanish-speaking teachers to potentially increase the Latino students' engagement and performance
- Encourage students to engage with the students at nearby schools
- Utilize the State Facility as benefit to the school
 - If stormwater management systems are implemented, have a core group from the facility that helps
 - Have the students help at the recycling center, or recognize where their recycled goods go



FRAMEWORK PLAN GARDEN HILLS

GARDEN HILLS

The Garden Hills plan concentrates on increasing walkability and adding elements to the streetscapes. Less infill is proposed because of the amount of density that currently exists adjacent to the school. The focal point of the plan is adjustments along Peachtree Road so that the neighborhood is physically linked to the amenities on the west side of the street. The shopping center with Publix and Barnes and Noble becomes a cultural and community hub with the creation of a multi-use plaza, and with the addition of more commercial, social services. The areas around Lindbergh City Center and southeast of Interstate 85 are currently physically disconnected from the rest of the school district by the Southern Railroad line. Streets, or at the least, pedestrian and bike connections, are proposed to connect over the tracks. Some streetscape improvements for walkability are proposed for Piedmont Road and Cheshire Bridge Road, and additional infill and green space is also proposed. Finally, another key component of this framework plan is to ensure that new multi-family developments allocate affordable units.

Legend:



Focus area of development [covered in master plans]



Focus area of development [not covered in master plans]



Major Streetscape Improvements for Walkability (lane reductions, pedestrian infrastructure)



Streetscape Enhancements (sidewalk additions and repairs)



New Proposed Street



Commercial / Office / Mixed Use Infill



Multi-Family Units Infill



Single-Family Units Infill



School / Community / Social Services Infill



New Proposed Green Space



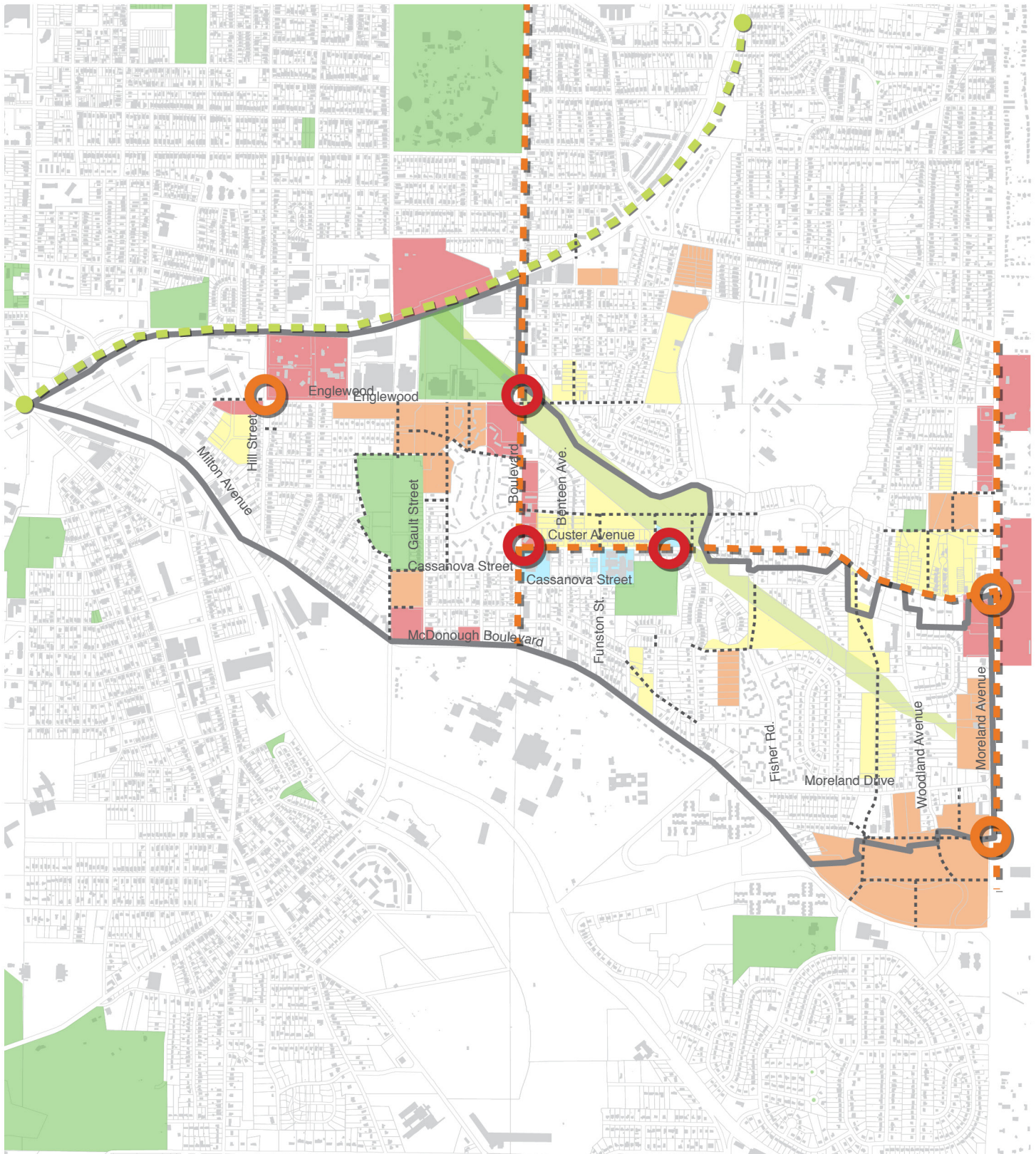
Existing Parks



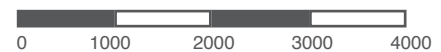
Existing Buildings



Garden Hills School District



FRAMEWORK PLAN BENTEEN



BENTEEN

The Benteen Framework plan emphasizes nodal infill development and streetscape adjustments to increase walkability and community investment. Important nodes are located adjacent to the school, at Englewood and Boulevard, at Moreland and Custer, and some long-term future development near the planned Atlanta Beltline area. Also added in the long-term recommendations, streets are reconnected to increase the ability to walk for students who live farther from the school. Another central component is the addition of a multi-use trail through the utility land that connects residents to the school and multiple new and existing nodes. This trail could also potentially link to the Beltline, if this portion is completed in the future. Community-serving organizations, additional affordable and market-rate housing, and commercial development are added in specified locations.

Legend:



Focus area of development [covered in master plans]



Focus area of development [not covered in master plans]



Major Streetscape Improvements for Walkability with lane reductions and pedestrian infrastructure



Future Atlanta Beltline Development



New Proposed Street



Commercial / Office / Mixed Use Infill



Multi-Family Units Infill



Single-Family Units Infill



School / Community / Social Services Infill



New Proposed Green Space



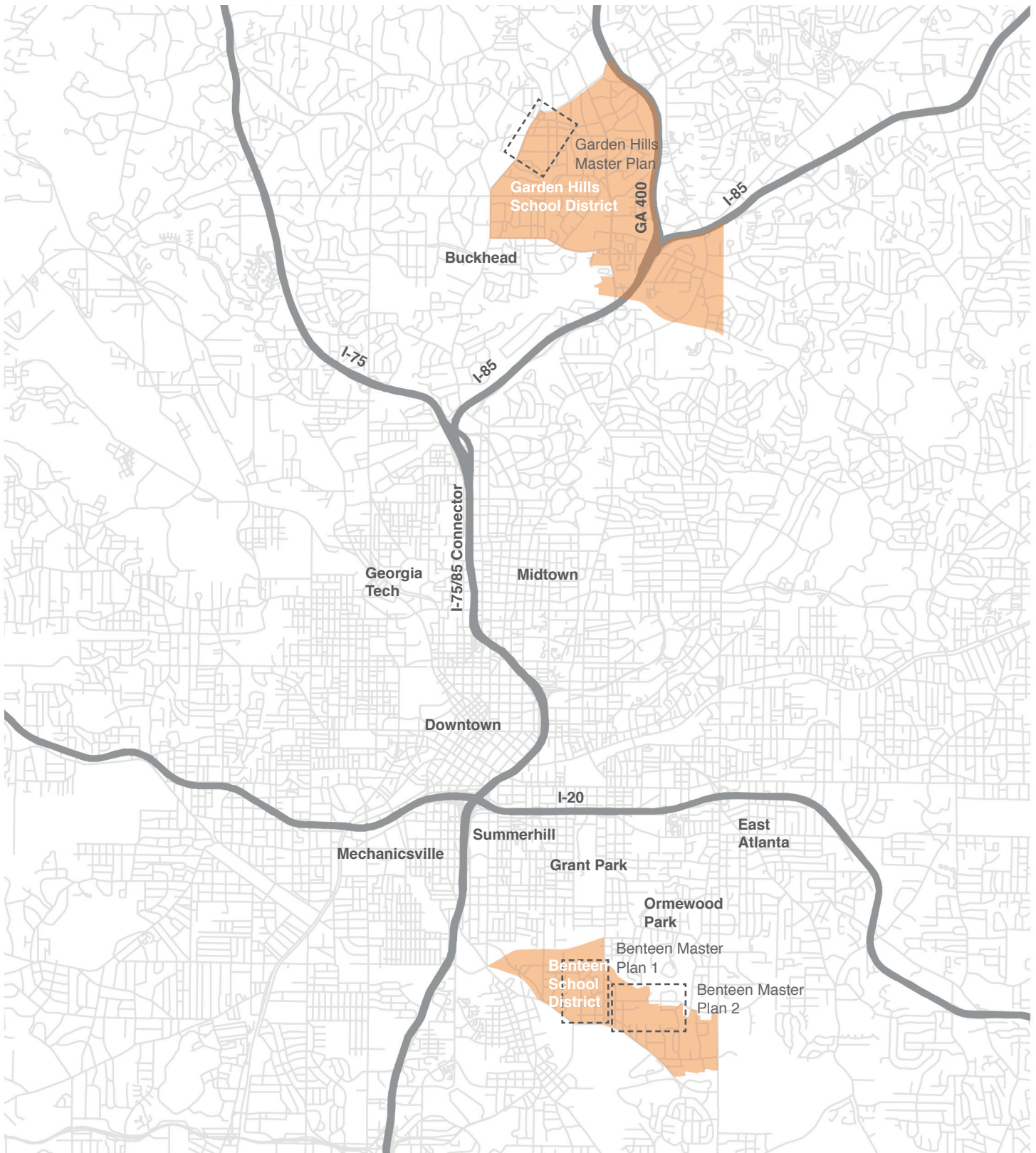
Existing Parks



Existing Buildings



Benteen Elementary School District Boundary



GARDEN HILLS

The Garden Hills Master Plan emphasizes the Peachtree Road corridor, the east/west connections to Garden Hills Elementary School, and the north/south connections between Garden Hills Elementary and the Atlanta International Academy. The focal point of this plan is an outdoor “Festival Marketplace” on the existing parking lot for Publix and Barnes and Noble. Commercial and mixed-use development is added along Peachtree Road to enclose the parking lot, creating a plaza with a new paving pattern and trees. On typical days, customers to the commercial uses can use the plaza for parking. For special events, the new buildings open with large doors facing the plaza, and street vendors can occupy the parking stalls, creating three double-loaded corridors for activity. Adjacent existing parking garages, marked on the plan, absorb the parking demands, and pavement changes at the intersections on Peachtree Road highlight the dominance of pedestrian connectivity. Few land use zoning changes will be needed to accommodate the new development because the existing zoning along Peachtree Road is commercial or multi-family. Some of this will work for the infill; however, some parcels will need to be changed to mixed-use.

BENTEN

Benteen Master Plan 1 develops the land around the elementary school. Infill development includes school-serving uses, such as daycare centers, tutoring centers, and after-school care. A plaza is added where the multi-use path in the utility land reaches the intersection of Custer Avenue and Benteen Park Drive. The plaza can be used for student events, such as selling goods from the community garden, shown in the site plan on page 111. Students can access the trail and plaza through a trail extension running behind the school building, and the plan focuses on connecting the school to Benteen Park, also shown in more detail in the site plan on page 111. Other infill includes neighborhood commercial and affordable single-family and multi-family units. Streets are also connected to create a cohesive network to encourage walking to school.

Benteen Master Plan 2 focuses on creating nodal gateway development at Boulevard and Englewood. Boulevard Crossing Park currently serves as a community gathering space, particularly for soccer games, and vacant parcels currently surround the intersection. Traffic lanes on Boulevard are reduced to allow room for sidewalks and a refuge median, enhancing pedestrian connections between the east and west sides of the community. The node includes mixed-income housing, commercial and community services infill, multi-family units, and single-family units. The street network is increased through additional street connectivity. New homes front Chosewood Park and Boulevard Crossing Park to increase safety and park use. The multi-use path in the utility land connects the nodal developments and parks to the rest of the Benteen community, and adds additional green space for public use.

Some land use zoning changes will be needed to accommodate the development; however, much of the land is currently vacant. For example, west of Boulevard, some land (formerly public housing) is zoned as “institutional” and will need to allow mixed-use and multi-family units. Much of the land around the school is zoned single-family or is vacant, so it will need to allow the community services.

Parking Garages for Shared Parking

Festival Marketplace on Existing Parking Lot

Buildings have large doors that open to plaza

Addition to the existing building, Typ.

Current Construction Site as of April 2013

Pharr Road NE

Peachtree Road

Peachtree Avenue

Mid-block Crossing

Delmont Drive

Pavement Change Typ.

Sheridan Drive

Atlanta International School

Gateway to Schools

Garden Hills Elementary

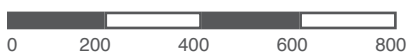
See Pg 110

Existing Path to the School

Rumson Road

Rolling Road NE

Westley Road



GARDEN HILLS: PEACHTREE ROAD

Main Components:

- Forming an outdoor Festival Marketplace on the parking lot (for special events) for existing Publix and Barnes and Noble
- Adding Commercial and Multi-Family Development along Peachtree Road
- Increasing the connections to Garden Hills Elementary school by creating gateways and opening the access drives for daily public use
- Connecting Garden Hills and Atlanta International Academy through better circulation and curriculum integration between the schools
- Retaining existing buildings and homes
- Including affordable housing and mixed-income housing for teachers, staff, and families

Legend:



Commercial Development Infill



Community Services Infill



Multi-Family Townhomes



Multi-Family Apartments



Mixed-Use Multi-Family /
Commercial Development Infill



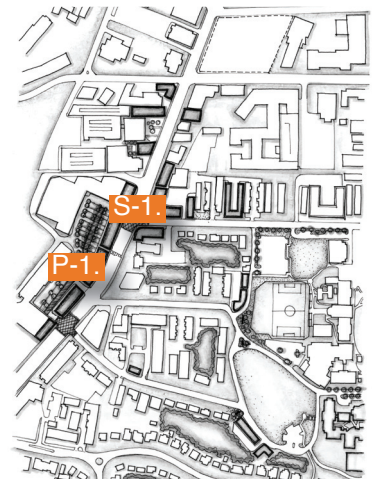
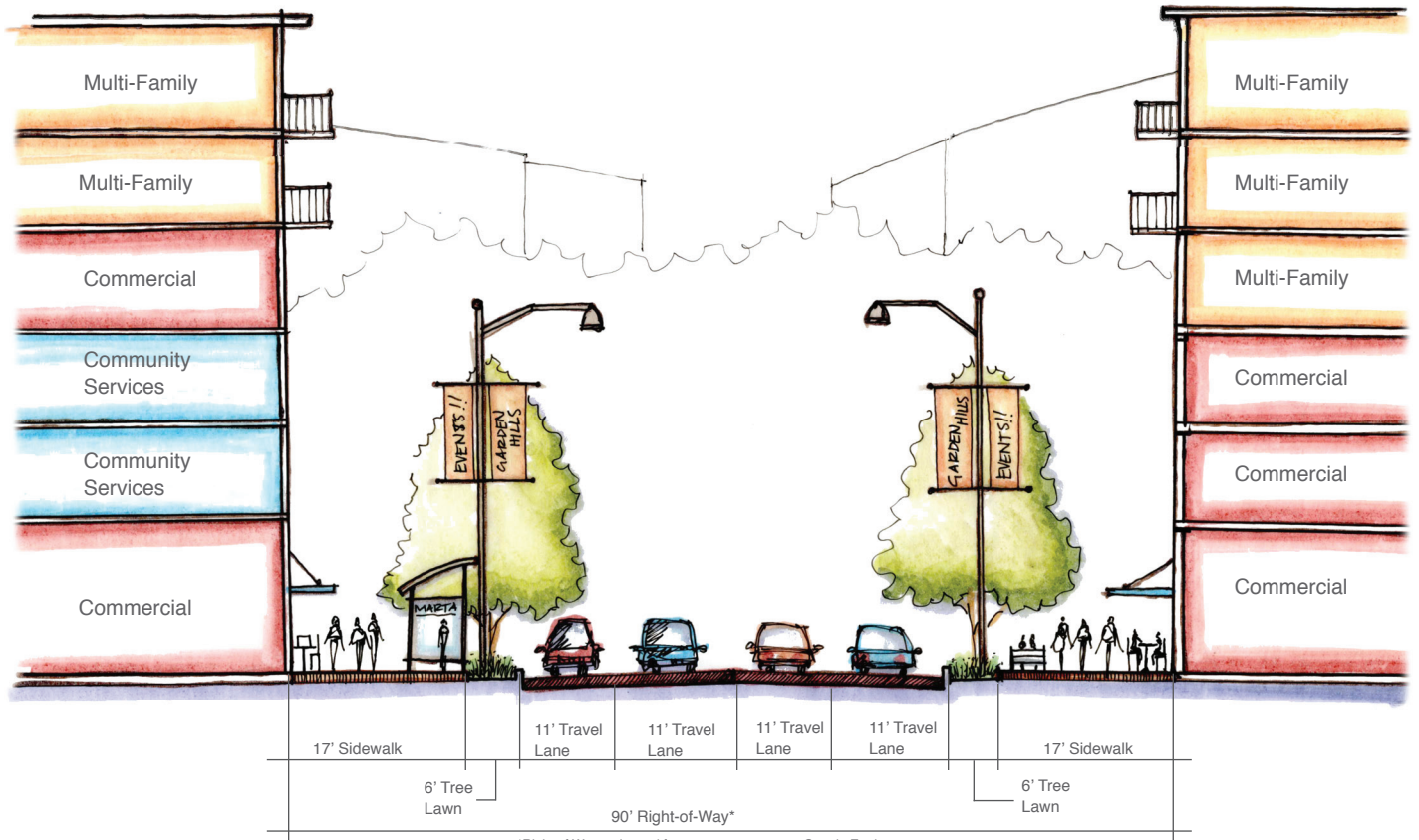
Single-Family Homes



Existing Buildings

GARDEN HILLS: STREET SECTIONS + DRAWINGS

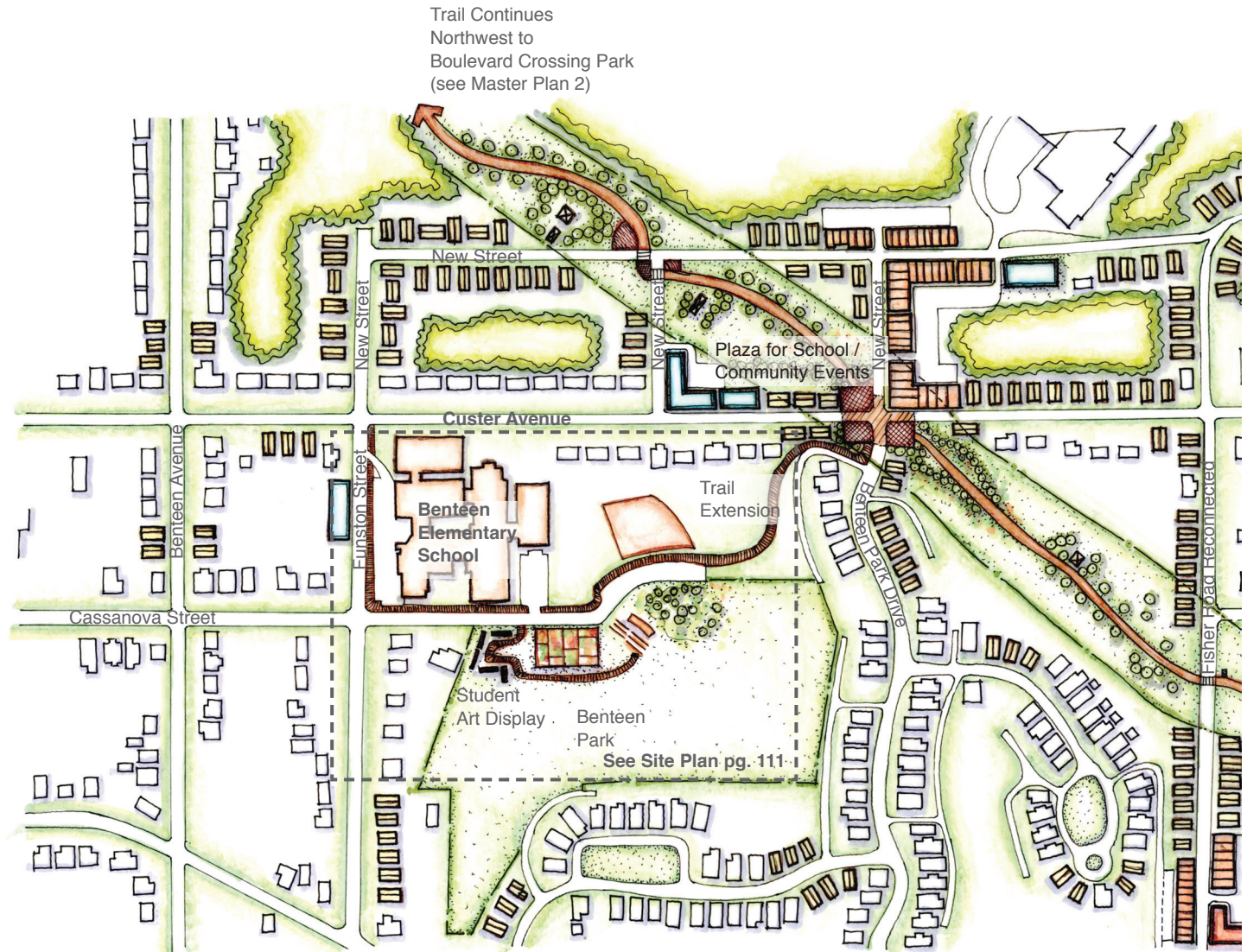
S-1. Peachtree Road Streetscape Adjustments





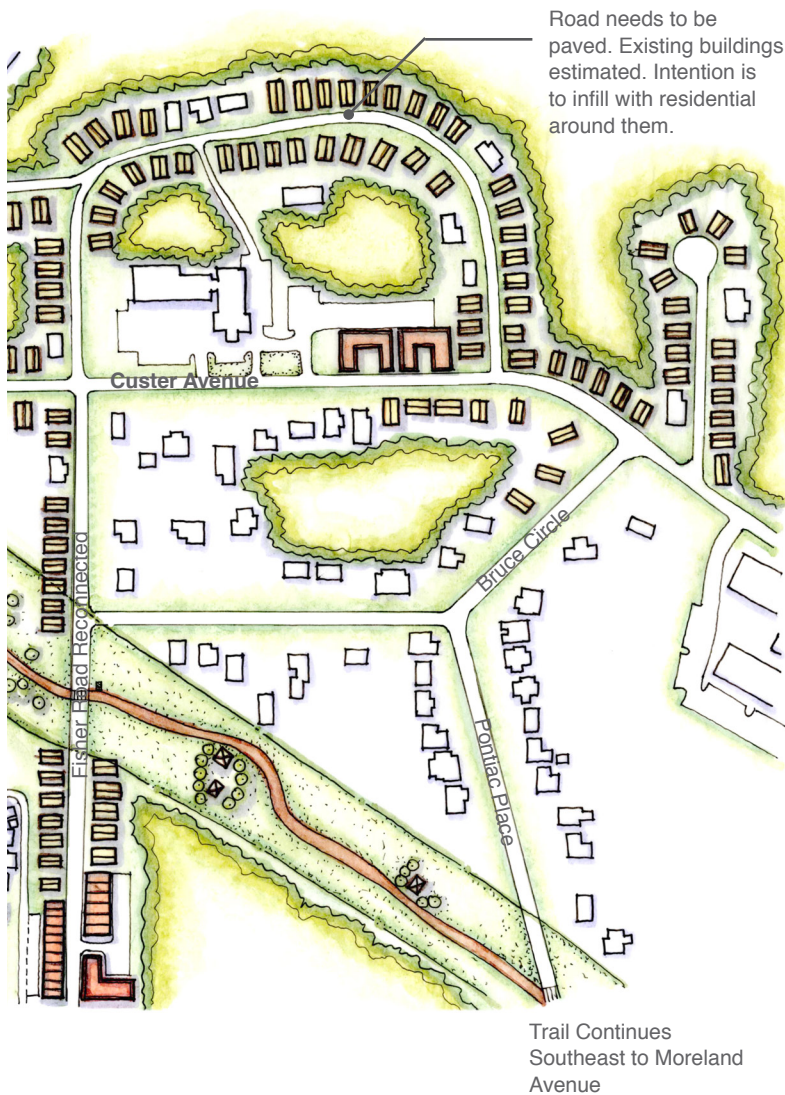
P-1. Proposed Festival Marketplace on existing Publix / Barnes and Noble Parking Lot on Peachtree Road

BENTEN: ADJACENT TO SCHOOL (MP 1)



0 200 400 600 800





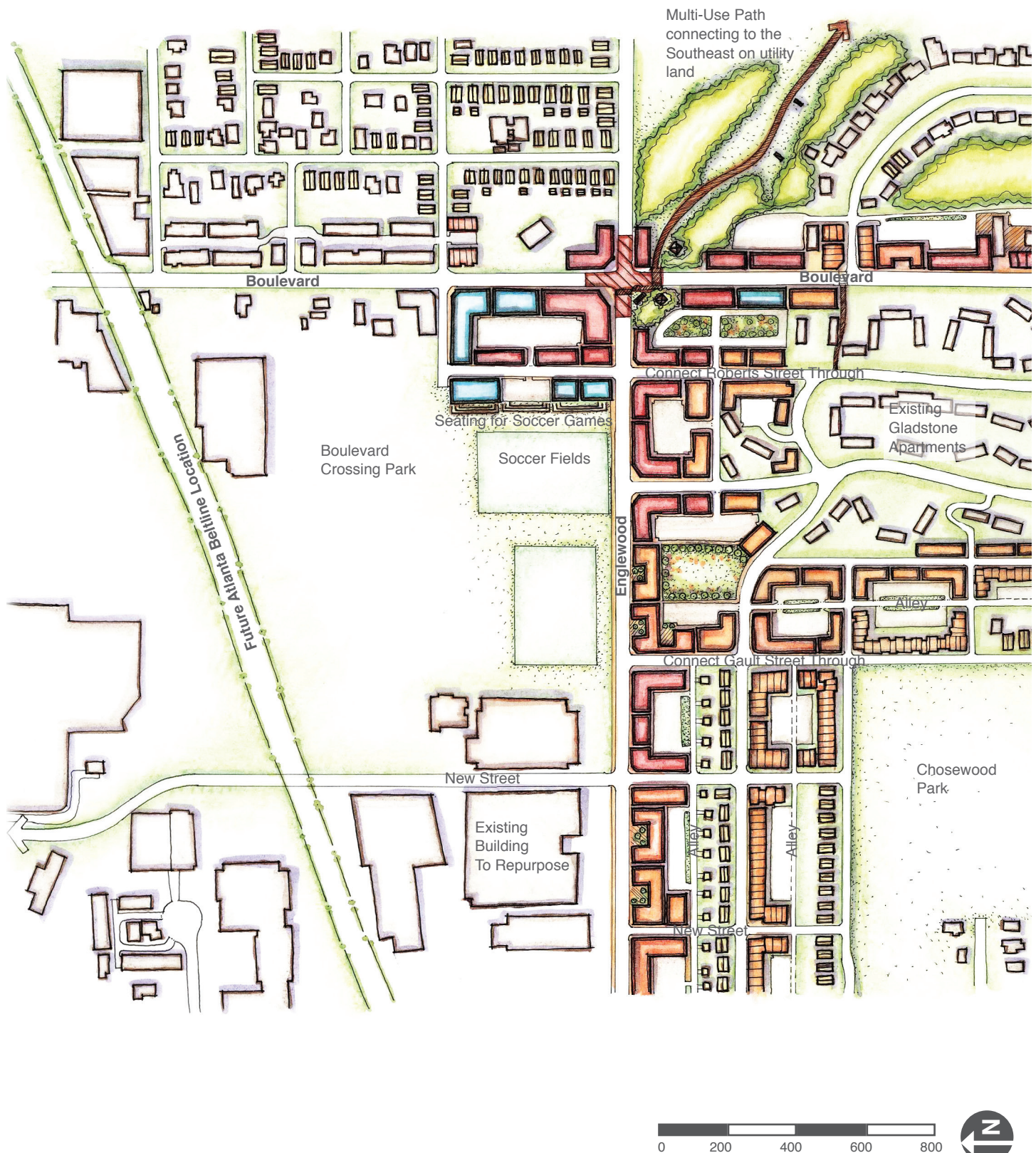
Main Components:

- Creating nodal development adjacent to Benteen Elementary School
- Connecting streets to form a stronger network for walking, biking, and driving
- Constructing a multi-use path connecting different areas to Benteen Elementary and Benteen Park in the existing utility right-of-way
- Adding Commercial, Multi-Family, and Community / Social Services serving the Latino Population
- Retaining existing buildings and homes
- Including affordable housing and mixed-income housing for teachers, staff, and families

Legend:

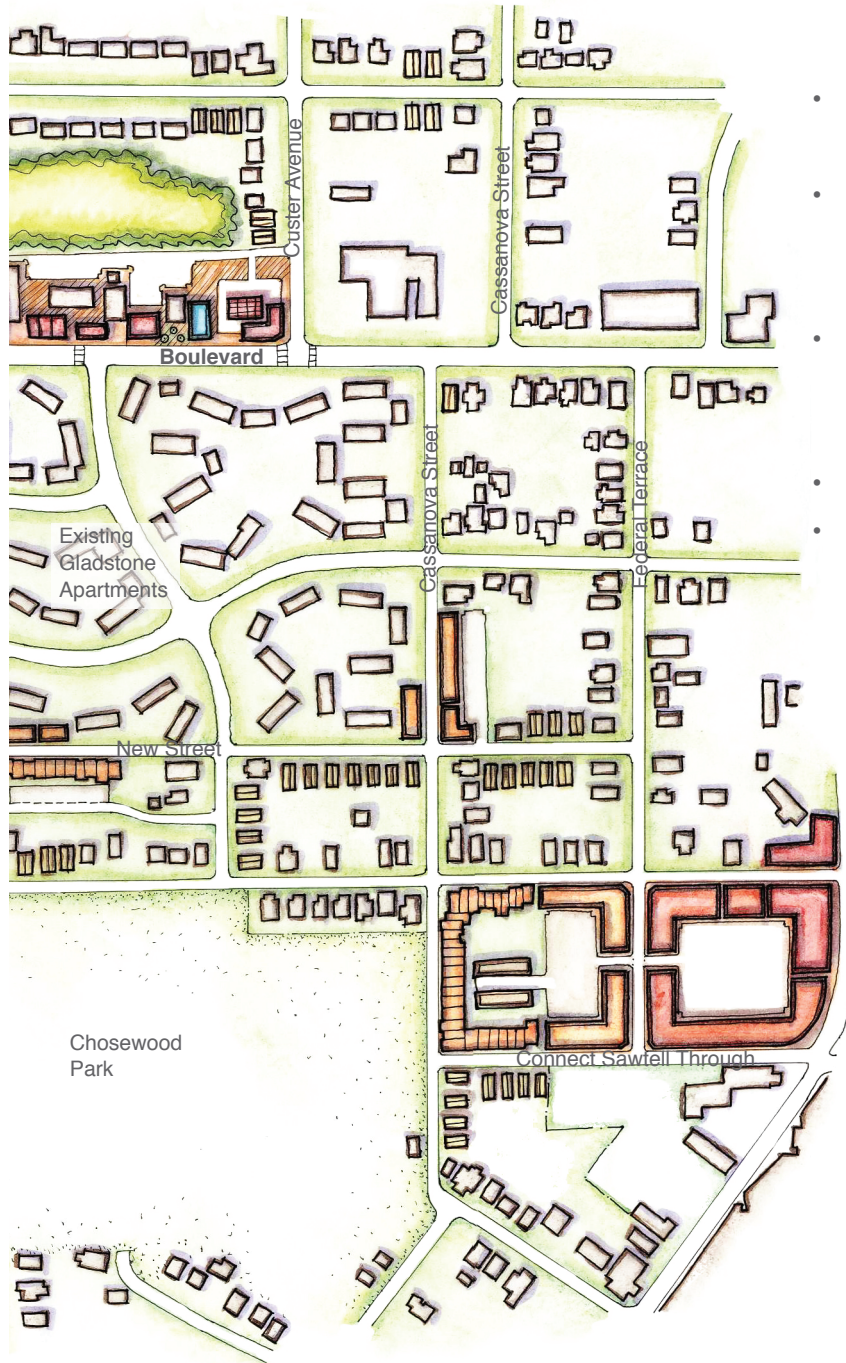
-  Commercial Development Infill
-  Community Services Infill
-  Multi-Family Townhomes
-  Multi-Family Apartments
-  Mixed-Use Multi-Family / Commercial Development Infill
-  Single-Family Homes
-  Existing Buildings

BENTEN: BOULEVARD AND ENGLEWOOD (MP 2)



Main Components:

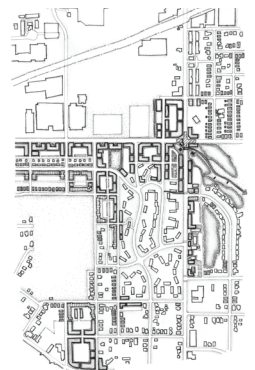
- Adding nodal development at Boulevard and Englewood near Boulevard Crossing Park, forming a gateway
- Connecting streets to form a stronger network for walking, biking, and driving
- Constructing a multi-use path connecting the new development to Benteen Elementary in the existing utility right-of-way
- Adding Commercial, Multi-Family, and Community / Social Services included in the development
- Retaining existing buildings and homes
- Including affordable housing and mixed-income housing for teachers, staff, and families



Legend:

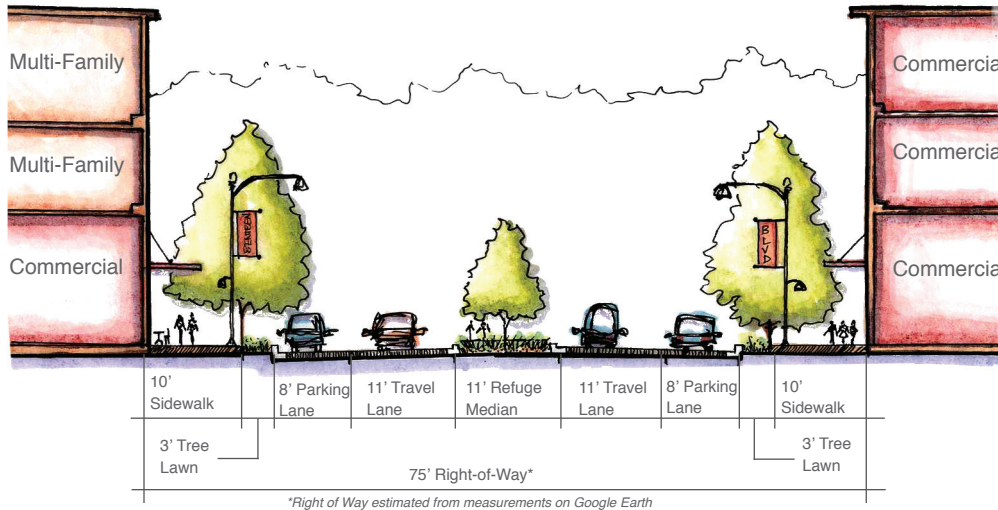
-  Commercial Development Infill
-  Community Services Infill
-  Multi-Family Townhomes
-  Multi-Family Apartments
-  Mixed-Use Multi-Family / Commercial Development Infill
-  Single-Family Homes
-  Existing Buildings

Actual Plan Orientation

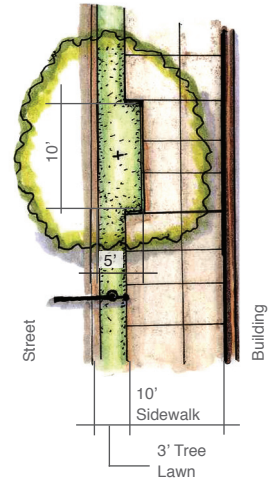


BENTEEN: STREET SECTIONS

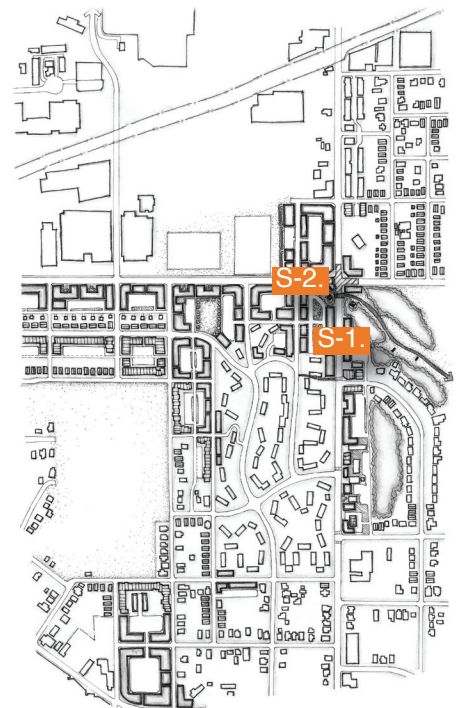
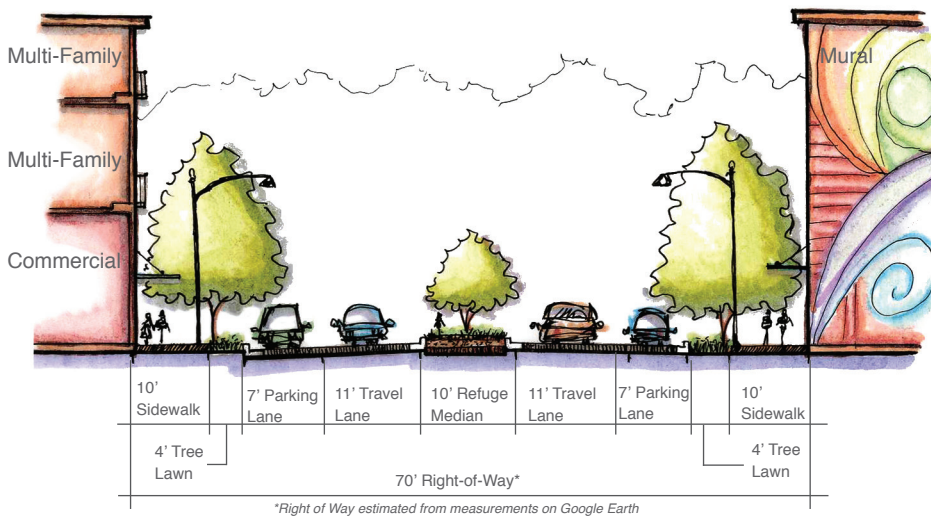
S-1. Boulevard Streetscape Adjustments



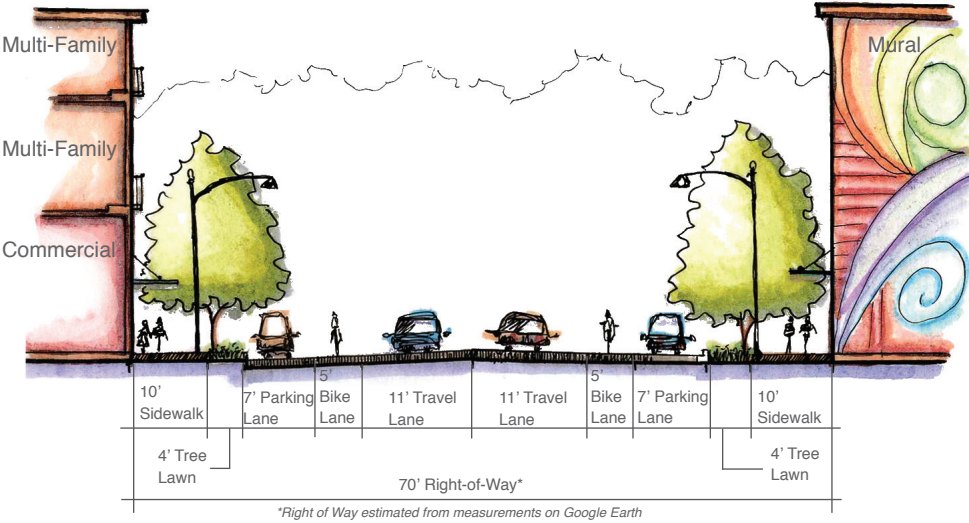
Tree Box and Sidewalk Detail Plan



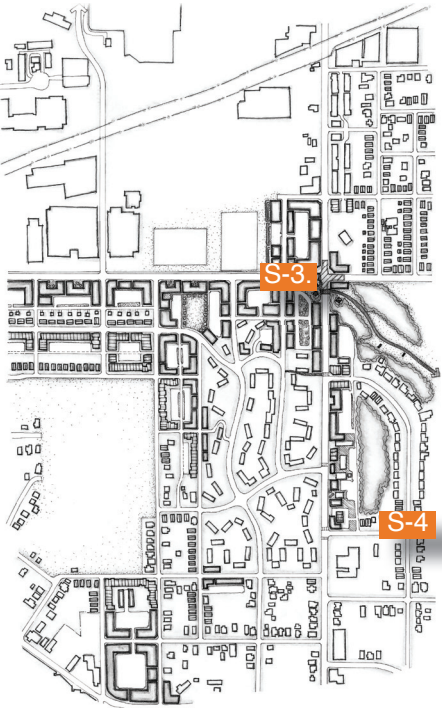
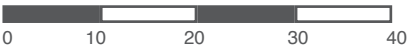
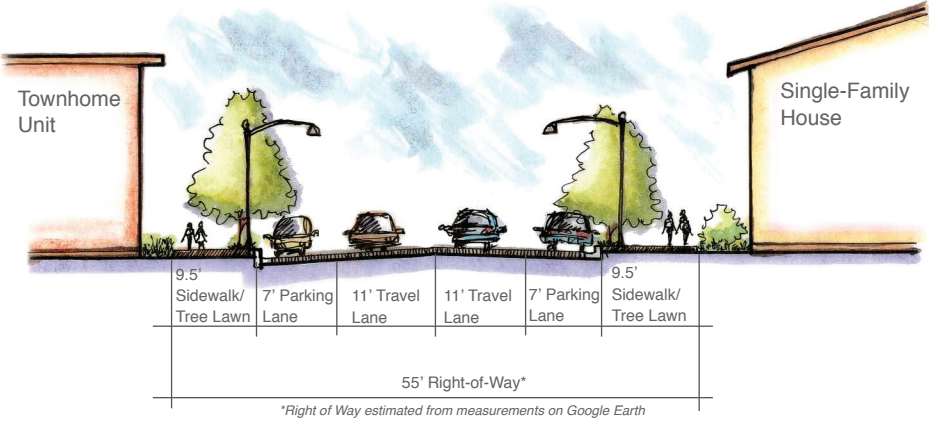
S-2. Englewood Streetscape Adjustments Option 1



S-3. Englewood Streetscape Adjustments Option 2

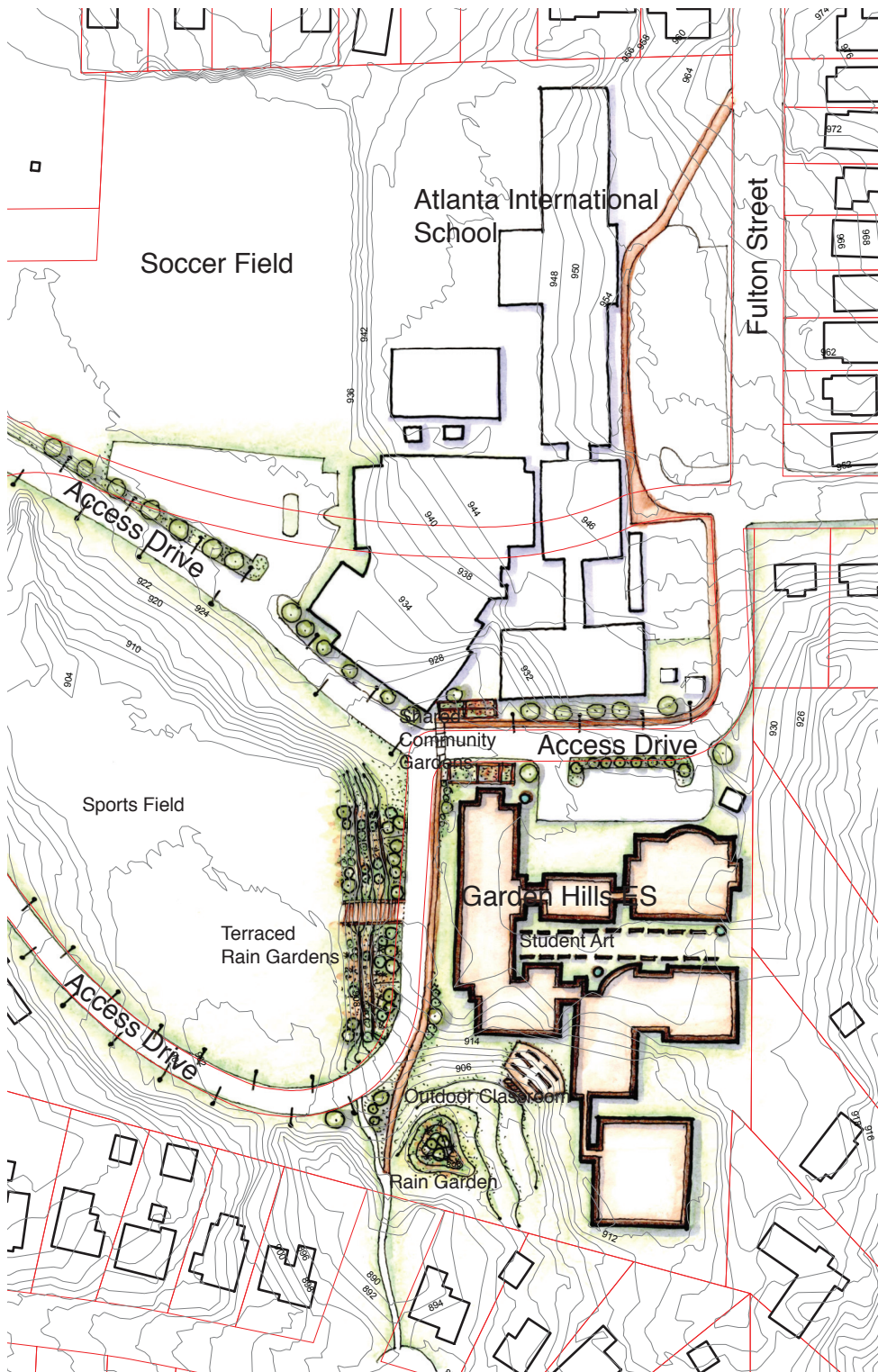


S-4. Typical Residential Street Adjustments



School Site Plans

GARDEN HILLS ELEMENTARY



This conceptual design demonstrates how multiple stormwater features can function as a system to treat stormwater from the site (although the topography is shown as altered, it is only a “rough” estimation of how the grading could work). The roof rainwater collected in the rain barrels can be used for watering the community gardens between the two schools. The outdoor classroom on the south side of the school overlooks the rain garden as a visual feature but also allows water to flow through the classroom elements, with “cut-outs” in the podium and seating areas, to the rain garden. The schools can also share the sports fields and playground equipment, and student art is also displayed in the courtyard. The access drives are opened to both schools and the streets are lined with lighting and signage to make a gateway and clear access to the schools.

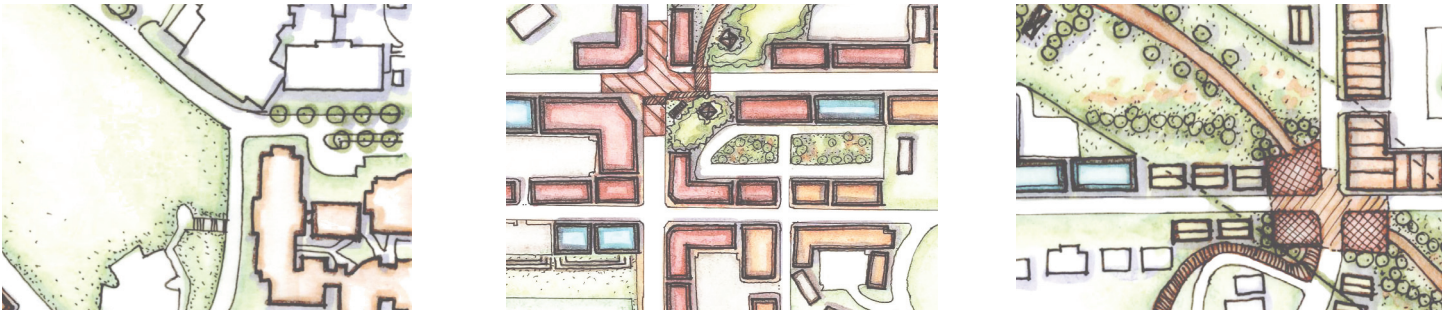


BENTEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



This conceptual design demonstrates how multiple stormwater features can function as a system to treat stormwater from the site (although the topography is shown as altered, it is only a “rough” estimation of how the grading could work). The roof rainwater collected in the rain barrels can be used for watering the community garden south of the parking lot. The outdoor classroom overlooks the rain garden as a visual feature but also allows water to flow through the classroom elements, with “cut-outs” in the podium and seating areas, to the rain garden. To allow room for the bio-swale, the playground equipment is moved slightly west. The community garden and outdoor classroom / gathering area also provide uses for visitors to Benteen Park.

Conclusion



Physical changes alone can not improve the quality of education, although providing the neighborhood framework and infrastructure can lead to higher quality neighborhoods, increased investment, and better schools. Policy changes at all levels, but particularly at the local, school district, and school levels are necessary to improve the access to quality education. Using schools and education as catalysts could help link and encourage community investment, particularly in disadvantaged areas that have the beginnings of a usable and flexible physical structure. The Framework Plans, Master Plans, and Site Plans demonstrate ways to incorporate elements affecting education at different scales, and show the levels at which change needs to occur. City, regional, and state governments will need to approve changes at the Framework, Master Plan, neighborhood, and school district levels. The Site Plans illustrate immediate site and curricular changes to activate the curriculum through site elements and increase interaction with the communities and adjacent schools. The following is a summary of immediate-, middle-, and long-term goals that these schools and others could implement:

Immediate-Term

- Ask for direct involvement from school officials in planning processes
- Change school siting regulations and land use zoning as necessary
- Make school district boundaries line up more closely with planning boundaries
- Raise awareness about the growing Latino population (and other populations) and their specific needs
- Encourage Latino-serving organizations to start satellite programs and eventually locate offices or relocate as needed
- Enhance the image of the school as a focal point and gathering space for the community
- Increase investment in the school through accountability (between parents and teachers, community and the school, students and the school)
- Identify key nodes for development within close proximity to the school and the types of development desired
- Share facilities with adjacent community organizations, parks, and schools, and create MOU's and joint-use agreements
- Stripe roads for initial bike and pedestrian improvements
- Install rain barrels, community gardens, and art on school campuses as part of the curriculum

Middle-Term

- Form partnerships with businesses for internships and real employment
- Encourage community organizations and churches to subsidize and provide affordable housing units
- Start streetscape improvements near the school and frequently-traveled streets
- Infill the commercial and social services uses near the school
- Start residential infill (multi- and single-family) near the school
- Enhance the open space networks and connectivity to the school
- Implement more in-depth stormwater management tactics on school campuses
- Design culturally-sensitive and serving spaces
- Enhance and increase bus service
- Start development on vacant parcels
- Construct gateway enhancements on school properties

Long-Term

- Continue constructing park and bike networks to serve wider areas
- Ensure affordable housing units are sustained from previous work, and create more using subsidies, such as LIHTC, New Market Tax Credits, and HUD grants for larger and mixed-income projects
- Develop streetscape projects on streets that are more difficult to change (State Routes, U.S. Routes)
- Start infill farther into the community as other development builds momentum
- Build outdoor classrooms on school campuses
- Reconnect street networks (street additions and extensions)

Because of the growing Latino and immigrant population, it will be necessary to accommodate the students and to provide high quality education. The Latino population has become the largest minority; therefore, a large share of the overall population, but it is still drastically underserved by education. Enhancing the quality of education will benefit the future of cities, states, and the country, and could lead to overall education improvement for all students.







APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Clients + Users

The following agencies, people, and groups could benefit from the research in this project.

- Current and future residents of the Garden Hills and Benteen neighborhoods
- Growing Latino population / students in both neighborhoods and Atlanta
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Georgia Department of Education
- Programs and Organizations addressing educational issues
- Business owners
- Neighborhood groups
- Local planning groups / governments
- Atlanta City Council
- City of Atlanta

LIMITATIONS

- This project will not consider all different ethnicities defined as “Latino” / “Hispanic” and their respective cultural differences
- This project will not re-design the entire Benteen and Garden Hills neighborhood areas

ASSUMPTIONS

- Any proposed zoning variances will be obtained to accommodate mixed-use developments and changes
- Vacant lots or buildings are available for new development or reuse
- Schools and other organizations will provide support for educational programs (ESL, etc.)

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